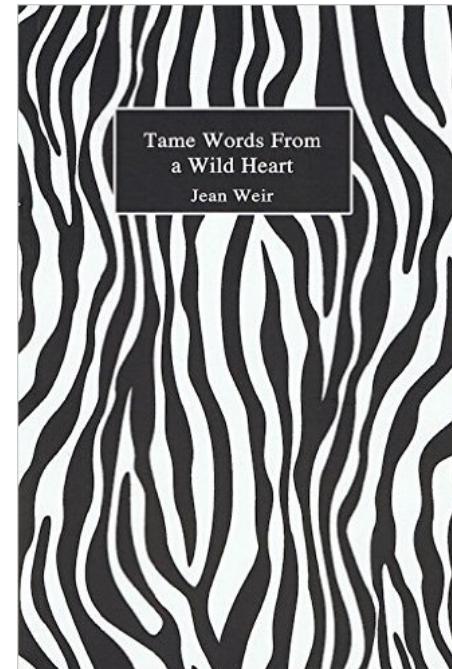


Elephant Archives

Tame Words from a Wild Heart

Jean Weir



Jean Weir
Tame Words from a Wild Heart
2016

archive.elephanteditions.net

2016

Contents

Original titles	5
Preamble	6
Taking Back Our Lives	11
Passion for Freedom	22
Armed Struggle and the Revolutionary movement	34
Athens, the Revolutionary Struggle trial: Statement to the terror court of Korydallos	40
UK, August 2011 – the struggle against the existent continues	46
London, 9 December 2010 – Thousands fight against exclusion and the death society in iconoclastic revelry	52
The End of anarchism? A few words...	54
To the Deranged (Postscript)	58

The name of John Moore, who is quoted opposite, has appeared on this page in various Elephant Editions pamphlets. Together with his companion Leigh Starcross, he collaborated in editing some translations following a brief encounter at a London anarchist bookfair. Introducing himself as an ‘anarchist poet’—he is author of four short books: *Anarchy and Ecstasy*, *The Primitivist Primer*, *Lovebite* and *Book of Levelling*—and known for his writings on anarcho-primitivism and for editing the collection of essays on Nietzsche, *I Am Not a Man, I Am Dynamite*—he had enquired with interest about future Elephant publications. To my reply that they were slowed down by my perennial need to repeatedly go over them before putting them in print, he unhesitatingly offered his collaboration, which he and Leigh duly and heartily gave for a number of titles. I left London for a while and we lost touch. It was with bitter disbelief that I later learned that he had died suddenly in October 2002.

The opposite citation is from one of his articles in an early issue of Green Anarchist.

Words have been colonised by power, so that increasingly language can only carry the meanings of the dominant order. Hence words are a powerful weapon in the arsenal of power. Language does not operate as a vehicle for communication, but rather as a means for effecting separation.

John Moore

The laboratories of power are programming a new model of renunciation for us. Only for us, of course. For the winning minority, the ‘included’, the model is still aggressivity and conquest. We are no longer the sanguinary, violent barbarians that once let loose in insurrections and uncontrollable revolts. We have become philosophers of nothing, sceptical about action, blasé and dandy. We have not even noticed that they are shrinking our language and our brains. We are hardly able to write any more, something that is important in order to communicate with others. We are hardly able to talk any longer. We express ourselves in a stunted jargon made up of banalities from television and sport, a barrack-style journalism that apparently facilitates communication, whereas in reality it debases and castrates it.

Alfredo M. Bonanno¹

¹from *The Tyranny of Weakness*, Propulsive Utopia p. 44, Elephant Editions.

For those in the logic of a horizontal attack on the workings of power (which are complex and always in a desperate battle to maintain equilibrium and consensus) on the other hand, the objectives are specific, they do not have ‘revolutionary’ connotations but insurrectional ones. A few comrades, an analysis of the objective in question, simple means of communication, a minimal organisational proposal and above all the decision to see the experiment through to its destructive climax. An informal insurrectionalist movement is above all a methodology of self-organised attack, not a fixed organisation. It does not require numbers in order to exist. A few comrades might enter relations of affinity and decide to move against a particular objective, in an insurrectionalist intermediate struggle. But they are not acting in a vacuum, they wish to stimulate conscious rebellion by the exploited, not just wait for the next riot to explode. Not desiring to increase in number as a group, they propose the creation of minimal self-organised formations that could multiply and widen into a generalised attack on the existent at any moment, but don’t have to wait for this before attacking themselves.

An informally organised projectuality of destructive action directed against class enemies or their structures refuses mediation, delegation or negotiation. It can have NO COMMON GROUND with political parties, unions or any other fixed political or armed structures, as these are antithetical to and enemies of freedom. The concept of alliances or a common struggle is absurd. Parallel lines never meet. If they do, one or other has lost its essence. Anarchists who end up making political alliances in the illusion of numerical strength are traitors: of themselves and what they say they stand for and of the rebels they had enchanted with their cries of freedom, to become nothing more than witless allies of the boss class.

Time is running out.. We must rescue our anger, our bad passions, from the swamp of tolerance and political correctness, focus our hearts and minds on the great challenge that is bidding us, break out and encounter our future comrades and accomplices, the exploited, the angry ones, the rebels. They are all around us but will remain invisible like ourselves until we come out into the open with unequivocal words and above all, actions.

The workings of capital are there to be found if we look for them, far from the propagandistic *fausse pistes* and staged ego-trips of trumped up puppets and showmen. Most of the materials necessary for attack are available on the shelves of the supermarkets and are simple household objects waiting to be appropriated. The rest, the ‘hardware’, the accomplices, the solidarity, will come forth from the reality of the struggle itself and the new paths it reveals.

Original titles

Taking Back Our Lives – 325 Magazine #8

Passion for Freedom – 325 Magazine #8

Armed Struggle and the Revolutionary Movement – 325 Magazine #10

Athens, the Revolutionary Struggle Trial: Statement to the terror court in Korydallos prisons – Dark Nights 28, 325.nostate.

The Struggle Against the Existential Continues (work in progress) – Angry news from around the world, 13 August 2011

London, 9 December – Thousands fight against exclusion and the death society in iconoclastic revelry – Angry news from around the world

The End of Anarchism? A few words... - *The End of anarchism?* – Luigi Galleani Elephant Editions, p. 5, A few words...

To the Deranged – intro to unpublished magazine, Deranged 00

Preamble

Words. Mere Words. The pages that follow are in part transcriptions of the spoken word—‘the wonder worker that is no more’, as Emma Goldman wrote wistfully over one hundred years ago when referring to the inadequacy of the spoken word to awaken thought and shake people out of their lethargy. Here in the twenty-first century anarchists no longer talk about spoken propaganda to awaken the masses, bemoaning the absence of orators such as Johann Most or Luigi Galleani. In rare encounters organized by comrades today ‘the masses’ are noticeably absent, they don’t even enter the equation. Organized meetings or ‘talks’ as they are dully referred to are well-attended if there are 50–100 comrades. But there is no need for panic. Now all but the most disconnected fossilized anarchists have moved beyond aims of a quantitative growth in a hypothetical anarchist movement—where discourses addressed ‘to the masses’ have degenerated into an insulting populism—to the elaboration of ideas and methods addressed towards immediate action and attack on power in all its forms. Numbers have ceased to be important for anarchists as a prerequisite for attack. The illusion of ‘Le Grand Soir’ was a wonderful dream, it kept the flame flickering and thousands of militants waiting in the wings.

No, lack of numbers is no cause for alarm. They are there, the exploited, all around us—are also ‘us’—and could take us by surprise again at any moment (as could we ourselves). In the realm of the quantitative our task is to experiment and spread an insurrectional method for the self-organization of the necessary destruction of power and subjugation. Small groups with intermediate destructive aims based on affinity that can multiply, spread horizontally and coordinate, without limit. The apparent rift between anarchist theory and practice thus disappears along with the false conflict between individual and mass, and not least the conviction that the tenets of anarchism must be espoused by the exploited before they can fight for their own freedom along with that of others. An informal practice of attack leads to freedom revealing itself qualitatively, in leaps and bounds, far from the straight line of quantity, education, progress and waiting.

We have not yet reached the total eclipse of thought, analysis and methodological experimentation. What we did depart from a long time ago is ideology (fixed postulates detached from action) and organizations of synthesis, in favour of informal anarchist insurrectionalist projectuality. This includes inter-

people into bored and boring participants in the same old designs of the same old minorities concealed behind the wall of resigned participation that can even embrace aspects of well choreographed street ‘violence’ or neighbourhood initiatives. There has hardly ever been a conscious decision to experiment some of the insurrectionalist methods that have appeared in embryo in the struggle in recent decades. These have rarely been taken up and addressed in deliberate attempts to provoke rebellion, preferring to subjugate anarchy to alliances with the leftist forces—that welcome them with open arms, of course—pouring all their creative/destructive potential into the dead end of patching things up.

Beyond all that, there is an elsewhere that is almost tangible but continues to elude us. It is dissipating into thin air, leaving a dissolute state of ennui tainting rebel visions and dreams. We have done it all, seen everything before. Stormed the heavens. Entered the prison gates and come out again, relatively unscathed. ‘The movement is at a low ebb’. ‘We need new ideas, new methods to transport us into the field of battle once again.’

In spite of that, attacks on capital and the State by individual and small groups of anarchists have been practically the only ones perceptible alongside the huge spontaneous revolts that have shaken the ground almost everywhere on the planet in the recent past. And this anarchist attack has not just been addressed at the structures of power but also against the enemy within, both in the form of citizen/snitches and a stagnant movement whose only strength is addressed at attempts to denigrate or recuperate the rebels, the uncontrollables.

However, the anarchist movement as a whole cannot be seen as a privileged point of reference for the necessary destruction of the existent. If the (apparently) floundering capitalists were to throw out buoys to those gasping to stay alive in the deadly seas of economic megalomania, how many anarchists would be among the first to reach out to grab one? What better than a bunch of organisationally obsessed anti-authoritarians to (self) manage the new wild capitalism’s eternal swindle of ‘fixing things’, now that formal authority is out of fashion and the politician has moved from inveterate clown to obsolete clone?

That is why the time to attack is now. There is nothing and no one to wait for. To act now, with determined projectuality where our destructive tension is the defining factor in our lives, not something that appears every now and again out of the blue. In the era of ‘use and discard’, flexibility, snap decisions and about-turns, there is little desire to think things through, discuss strategies and methods, identify an intermediate target and act towards the destructive culmination of the attack.

The production of trivia has led to a trivialised world. Some of what loosely defines itself the anarchist movement has fused with the urban subculture, dissipating tensions into a social whirl of benefit gigs and various forms of anaesthetic from music to ‘soft’ substances to dull the pain.

To the Deranged (Postscript)

These pages are for the deranged, individuals not submerged in habit, regimented by protocol or banalised by identity, who refuse to be controlled, ‘facilitated’ or herded into numerically-oriented deadlines. They want to encounter those who can still raise their voices and howl with joy in a subdued world where the ironic smirk of the all-knowing has replaced the wink of complicity and laughter has dissolved into a kind of hiccup, a punctuation mark to round off the glib remarks of the eternally detached. They would like to meet those who combine destructive tension with wisdom, and, armed with creative devilry, venture into the poisoned jungle of capital to hack it down and let life surge forth.

The deranged are neither dumbed down by habit nor blinded by the ‘greatest show on earth’. Rather than run around for a cause to support they are fighting their own cause, egoistically conquering moments of freedom, subverting and attacking the existent with all means, knowing that Chaos is life and that Reason continues to generate monsters.

The authoritarian organisations of attack in the not too distant past were products of Reason, but they didn’t get the chance to put their ultimate goal of managing power into effect. These structures have seen their day and old schema have given way to flexible projects of social control. It is precisely in this terrain that recycled Marxists and certain anarchists/libertarians are finding common ground, to the point that you can be an anarchist one day, a post-marxist the next and if the stomach resists, mutate into an indigestible hybrid. The anarchist aesthetic is more appealing, but the radical left have so many fascinating theories... The labyrinthine tomes of these aspirants-to-power-turned-cohabitants-with-the-existent are more seductive these days, their workerist verbiage now extinct along with the proletariat.

Social control is becoming self-control: large numbers released from the prison/factories and mines of western Europe—thanks to neo-slavery and digital technology these now function (almost) perfectly on the other side of the planet—require order from within and the suppression of individual tensions. This has led to the development of an ‘anti-authoritarian’ practice and a ‘non-hierarchical’ politically correct language that has been generally accepted regardless of ideology, which has taken a back seat. The internalised fear of a raised voice, someone speaking out of turn, the intrusion of an idea or critique into the smooth machinery of dissenting consensus is turning thousands of

mediate struggles which have been gestating in embryo for too long without being fully embraced and experimented apart from a (very) few notable exceptions. The informal adventure starts from a group of comrades approaching an area of tension with a qualitative proposal of self-organised attack, introducing a methodology such that when quantity does make its appearance it is not in the form of a malleable amorphous mass, but of a multiplicity of thinking, self-organised creative/destructive individuals. Their action is therefore not reduced to simply striking the structures of the enemy but involves elaborating an informal coordination of attack to be grasped and experimented. In order to do this we need strong ideas and a methodological proposition, where words come into their own as part of the arsenal of attack.

Looted by the peddlers of abstraction into the web of illusions or immersed in the mud of leftist mystification, our words—our ideas—need to be stolen back into the totality of the struggle, from where we can revitalise them as transitory instruments to identify the enemy, ignite passions and transform reality.

Only religions—including the secular ones—invest words with the authority of eternal truth. For us, words have the meaning that we give them after decolonising them from power at a given moment, in particular conditions of the clash. They become elucidating and propulsive, help us to elaborate and actualize our attack making it discernible and multipliable. Precisely at a time when language is being flattened by power and its technologies, anarchists are in the forefront of a reduction to slogans, fetishisation and acronyms, ACAB surely winning the prize in the race for cerebral and projectual lobotomisation. We are not interested in locking up words, ourselves with them, in fortresses of identity or defending them as our property. There is no point in arguing over words. When gone into they turn out to have completely different meanings for each of those using them. We need to find our affinities on the basis of a wider language, the language of knowing, experimenting, seeking, ‘encountering what our words betray rather than illuminate, elsewhere, in our hearts, at the cost of our lives’², not through repetition and incantation.

Discourse remains and always will be a vital part of the anarchist struggle. Elaborating and elucidating concepts as well as clearing out the garbage acquired through thoughtless alliances or mental laziness is a task to be accomplished without delay. It’s not a question of holding the ‘truth’ but of finding and living out the words we need. Not in some alternative anarchist dictionary but in the depth of meaning discovered in fulfilling our destructive longing, sabotaging the existent and expropriating life from a death-orientated society. The latter is as fragile as the choreographed brutes it employs to beat up those lured into the illusion of huge spectacular demonstrations. Its capacity to continue comes from complicity and consensus, fear, complacency and habit, all worthy

²Alfredo M. Bonanno, introduction to *Feral Revolution* by Feral Faun.

targets of articulated sabotage by small groups and individuals armed with few profane words and simple actions against its temples and their management. Without for that leaving the infrastructure of the Moloch intact. ‘Anyone can take a walk in the night. And then, it is also a healthy activity. Anarchists have not waited passively for the masses to awaken, they have thought of doing something themselves’.³

Self-taught concerning ideas and methods, anarchists have considered public meetings and talks among the most valuable instruments of their armoury from time immemorial. Once these would take place in the rooms or place of a specific anarchist group, where a known comrade would give a contribution to some aspect of the struggle. Today, while the internet discharges emissions almost at the speed of light, the alternative movement (which anarchists often confuse themselves with) oscillates between inviting remunerated experts and organising meetings in politically correct circles, where the chatter of opinionism imbued with moral righteousness is ‘facilitated’ in the chronological order of hands raised, thereby preventing any coherent discussion, so in no way disturbing the plans of those behind the scenes. Not to be forgotten are the great mass assemblies so much in vogue, which anarchists have begun to adhere to in certain parts of the world. These are excellent stomping grounds for those with a predilection for holding the floor, arenas where discussion becomes a spectacle of verbal gymnastics among the gladiators of political rhetoric. And by default for those who ‘can’t speak in public’ (i.e. don’t have any thoughts so impelling that they will get them out, no matter at what cost to their modesty) to have their activity mapped out for them. These lyceums of unification and conformity are not even adverse to applying their oratory skills to defamation and the criminalisation of individual acts in the delegated zone of combat.

But getting back to attack... It would be absurd to take into consideration the insurrectional anarchist concept of affinity groups—based on reciprocal knowledge—if we were not prepared to discuss ideas and methods unashamedly and create the possibility to do so, both in public and in the shadows far from listening devices of all species. And some of the most interesting discussions among anarchists have never been recorded or transcribed, for obvious reasons. Not for that should we recede into a world of whispers, succumb to the deafening roar of silence or dissolve into an endless murmuring of ‘opinions on subjects we know nothing about’⁴. Even less should we delegate everything to the academics who have embraced anarchism as a subject to be studied always approaching it with a safe dose of detachment, taking care not

There is no incompatibility or contradiction between communism and individualism in the context of a free united co-operation of all people for production based on solidarity. Communism is simply the foundation by which the individual has the opportunity to regulate himself and carry out his functions.

Every anarchist who is faithful to his denial of privilege and aspires to an economic reality where land, mines and all the tools of production are indivisible common property is, in his aspirations, a communist. At the same time if he denies authority and is part of the realisation of complete independence and autonomy of the individual from any economic, political and moral boss, he is inevitably an individualist. Antithesis? No, integration.

It would no doubt be interesting to make an in depth analysis of Galleani’s thesis, his use of language, his unqualified belief in progress, etc., but here we have preferred to give the reader just a few sparks from what might otherwise seem to present itself as an historical document, and end with Galliani’s unadorned home truth: The anarchist movement and the labour movement [read leftism] follow two parallel lines, and it has been geometrically proven that parallel lines never meet.

Let’s fight with all those who have no place in this execrable world, for the conquest of life and the realization of our dreams.

³Alfredo M. Bonanno, *The Insurrectional Project*, Elephant Editions, 2000

⁴Or: ‘We can talk endlessly, particularly of things we know nothing about. We can express any opinion we like, even the most daring, and disappear behind the murmuring.’ *At Daggers Drawn with the Existent, its Defenders and its False Critics*, p. 3, Elephant Editions

measure' that we often refer to, yet rarely think through. If we did, this would affect our choices and eliminate dubious 'alliances'. We repeat ad nauseam that the means we use condition the ends we achieve. By the same token the ends—intended as embarking on the road of freedom, which as we have said is infinite and never actually 'ends'—we desire should affect the means we use, and never losing sight of the latter might prevent some unfortunate, when not disastrous, undertakings.

We are living in times of 'crisis' and this often leads comrades down the blind alley of pragmatism and compromise, verging on political realism. The arrogant upsurge of nazis, sadistic cops or whatever other enemies of freedom can lead to a unidimensional stance in alliance with those who define themselves in oppositional terms, thereby losing sight of the revolution, the splendor of its beckoning and the vicissitudes of creative diffused insurgency and attack.

Galleani repudiates in total any struggle for partial gains or reforms, 'the ballast of the bourgeoisie' that the latter throws out under the violent pressure of the masses, making some 'inane concessions'. If the socialist aims at the conquest of parliament (albeit without the State), or at least some form of administrative bodies, the most ardent desire of the anarchist—and all the 'excluded'—is to see parliament in flames as part of the self-organisation of the attack. '..instead of the mere passive and polite resistance so fervently recommended by the socialists, the anarchists prefer boycott, sabotage and, for the sake of struggle itself, immediate attempts at partial expropriation, individual rebellion and insurrection.' To the horror of the socialists.

For Galleani the consequences of anarchist abstentionism 'are far less superficial than the inert apathy ascribed to it by the sneering careerists of "scientific socialism". By stripping the State of the constitutional fraud with which it presents itself it exposes its essential character as representative, procurer and policeman of the ruling classes'. In the name of what 'greater cause' can any anarchist put that self-evident truth aside, thereby liquidating themselves instantaneously, reducing being an anarchist to some kind of identity that can vacillate under the pressure of lack of perspective and the abject principle of 'necessary evil'? At a distance of over a century, Galleani reminds us that 'Anarchism rejects authority in any form: to the principle of representation, it opposes the direct and independent action of individuals and masses: to egalitarian and parliamentarian action, it opposes rebellion, insurrection, the general strike, the social revolution.' For any of us who might have forgotten.

Galleani denounces the supreme cowardice of rejecting individual acts of rebellion when it is we ourselves to have sown the first seed. 'The propaganda of the anarchists creates the psychological climate among the people...our responsibility in all acts of rebellion is more precise, more specific and undeniable where our propaganda has been energetic, vigorous and has left a deep impression...'.

to offend the hand that feeds them.

In recent years with the development of an informal movement, there has been a re-awakening of the method of public meetings or encounters, both at local, national and international level. These are often the fruit of immeasurable blood sweat and tears by comrades who consider it important to create a moment for going into theoretical questions, sometimes lasting a number of days, with all the necessary preparation: posters, leaflets, finding and defending a suitable place etc. And last but not least, finding anarchists prepared to put their head above the parapet and talk in public. The encounter 'Informal Days: International Anarchist Symposium in Mexico', in December 2013 was a fantastic example of such an undertaking, and the fact that the ideas of certain anarchists represent a threat for power in a given context of struggle was confirmed when Alfredo Maria Bonanno was prevented from entering the country in order to participate and Gustavo Rodríguez Romero was kidnapped, tortured and expelled from Mexico during the Symposium itself.

Such encounters are indispensable instruments for an informal movement with no fixed organisational structures and are obviously 'more than the sum of their parts', creating occasions for every level of discussion and confrontation between comrades, not just the official talks. These events often do not materialise due to a lack of comrades prepared to put themselves on the line and express their ideas in public. But don't we know that the choice of freedom implies the refusal of leaders or the delegation of the struggle? Going beyond self-imposed or acquired limitations? Daring to enter the unmapped territories inside and around us? We are not professionals of any of the kinds of action that the struggle requires, no matter how complex and well-executed they might turn out to be. And plunges into the elsewhere of conscious choice can procure immense joy, be it the taking back of means in order to advance a project, striking a class enemy or their servants, sabotaging some of the workings of capital or expressing our ideas in an organised public encounter. Here a tension can come to create itself among the comrades present in the squat, amphitheatre or outside in a piazza such that an intensity of focus creates an energy capable of releasing hidden treasures, ephemeral, as most of such meetings go unrecorded.

Exceptionally, the following pieces were recorded and transcribed by comrades who, deeming the discourse worthy of wider diffusion, spent hours decoding barely comprehensible registrations. It is thanks to them that many of these pages exist at all. Not forgetting the esteemed interpreters at these events, who are invisibly present in this brochure as none of the discourses transcribed were addressed to English-speaking comrades (or judges in the case of the Revolutionary Struggle trial). Their job was aggravated by the fact that the talks were off the cuff, without a written script, except for the pronouncement to the terror court in Korydallos prison in Athens. We made these unforgettable journeys together, cheerful duos or, in the latter case, players in a murderous

theatre of the absurd deep in the bowels of a vile prison that counts many of our comrades among its hostages.

Putting the following texts together has been an intense undertaking, far beyond the ‘mere words’ available to who might be reading these few pages now. It has been a reliving of passionate moments with comrades in various cities of Europe and beyond, who continue along the paths of their variegated struggles.

Of the three comrades of Revolutionary Struggle who organised an international meeting while temporarily released from jail awaiting trial, two of them, Nikos Maziotis and Kostas Gournas are again hostages in the dungeons of the State, Nikos after being wounded in a shootout while on the run with a ‘bounty’ of one million euros on his head, while the third, Pola Roupa, is engaged in the total struggle of life on the run with a similar price on her freedom. Their unwavering courage and passion continue to inspire us, like that of so many other beautiful anarchist comrades near and far, locked in the cages of wretchedness or turning the world upside down in the bittersweet adventure of life in hiding.

The pernicious activity of the terror court in Korydallos continues unabated, churning out centuries of prison.

The other inclusions in this ‘work in progress’ are notes that have appeared at various moments over the past few years. They were stimulated by events or deadlines that sparked off feelings strong enough to cross the threshold from the void to words on paper that those of us who are not writers, i.e. those who do not express their ideas regularly, compulsively and disciplinarily in the written word, require.

These pages are neither a memoir nor a sentimental journey, they are a going over and sharing of some ideas, a contribution to the ongoing multiform struggle and an exhortation to all of us, in the prison cities of capital or wherever else on this stolen planet, to find our own words, reign in our passions, seek out our comrades and act.

Let’s continue the assault on the existent with all means, undeterred by those who would silence us with weapons from the stockpile of reaction, be they the kick of the democratic jackboot, the empty chatter of opinion or the siren calls of the candy men of hope.

Jean Weir

in the great zoological park generally considered the ‘movement’ ‘against’.

Without a doubt there are anarchists everywhere—but is there anarchism? Is there, that is, a sense of the totality of the struggle, a struggle that always tends towards the absolute destruction of the existent and the experience of freedom, wherever one is, in whatever manifestation of the partial struggle we are involved in at a given moment?

The totality of the struggle is not a global vision of the enemy setup in all its forms, it is the totality of freedom without limits or impediments of any kind, therefore something in movement, that grows to infinity, always in act, yet totally present when we think it, destroying limits and domestication.¹⁸ How many anarchists consciously transport this sense of the totality of the struggle into the ardor of their attack against the enemy?

Once we grasp it it never leaves us, it is our compass whether we are in the stormy seas of revolt or in the stagnant waters of babylon, whereas to ignore it leads us into the dead end of ecumenism, frontism, illusions of quantity, or simply being swept into oblivion by the great tsunami of the excluded in revolt. Galleani doesn’t talk about the totality of the struggle in this little book, but he does talk about something without which the latter could never materialise. He talks about anarchist communism, that which ‘implies that the material and moral needs of everyone be satisfied without any restriction other than that which is imposed by nature’ and that the contribution to production ‘should be given voluntarily by everyone, according to their capacity and aptitude’.

As well as implying the destruction of government in all its manifestations, the non-existence of authority means the freedom of the autonomous individual, all individuals, within the free society (or absence of society, in whatever forms this would take).

Even if allusions are made to anarchist communism today, the implications of what this signifies are rarely if ever gone into by anarchists, as the immediacy of the struggle is what interests us and fear of drawing up a ‘blueprint of the future society’ terrorises us with its seeming implication of imposing a model, therefore authority.

In response to his old comrade Merlino’s statement that what is essential in anarchism has been absorbed by socialism, Galleani elaborates the clear distinction between anarchist communism and the socialist model of collectivism. Collectivism, common ownership of the means of production involving ‘from each according to their ability, to each in proportion to their work’, is based on an evaluation of the finished product, whereas anarchist communism implies full satisfaction of the needs of the individual regardless of the value of the product. Surely this must be the essential foundation of the ‘world without

¹⁸These words have been stolen from Alfredo M. Bonanno’s introduction to *Feral Revolution*, Feral Faun.

The End of anarchism? A few words...¹⁵

The end of anarchism? An odd question perhaps at a time when just about everybody one meets is ‘an anarchist in their heart of hearts’. No enlightened person would ever admit to being in favour of authority or hierarchy today, and even many of the marxist-leninists of once upon a time would never admit to being in favour of a State.¹⁶

And the anarchists? There are anarchists everywhere, in the four corners of the earth. More than a few are giving the power structure a sting, inspiring others to do likewise, and some are magniloquently paying a high price for it.

There are anarchists—and not only—present in focal points of the struggle such as that against high speed railways and nuclear power, in large demonstrations and confrontations with the police—while there are also those who silently light up the darkness of the night with the iridescent glow of freedom.

Anarchists defend immigrants against racist attacks and support rebellions and riots in the concentration camps of fortress Europe. There are anarchists locked up in prisons, and anarchists who act in solidarity with them. In the UK, following their spirited presence in the student demos of last year and a quantity of diffused attacks elsewhere over a period of time anarchists were given the status of public bug-bear by the police and media, who invited the populace to ‘shop an anarchist’.¹⁷

There are anarchist individualists—and anarchist individuals.

There are anarchists who are against society and anarchists who participate in neighbourhood assemblies. There are even anarchists who vote in elections, although they are not making a song and dance about it.

There are anarchist academics and academic anarchists. And then there are the anarchist punks, activists, organizationalists and all manner of libertarians

¹⁵Introductory note to the recently republished *The End of Anarchism?* by Luigi Galleani

¹⁶In fact, Lenin himself preferred the slogans of the anarchists until the ‘dictatorship of the proletariat’ and his own personal dictatorship were firmly established. Read *The Guillotine at Work* by Gregory P. Maximoff, Cienfuegos Press.

¹⁷...next to an image of the anarchist emblem, the City of Westminster police’s “counter terrorist focus desk” called for anti-anarchist whistleblowers [snitches] stating: “Anarchism is a political philosophy which considers the state undesirable, unnecessary, and harmful, and instead promotes a stateless society, or anarchy. Any information relating to anarchists should be reported to your local police.” (press report 31 July 2011)

Taking Back Our Lives⁵

‘Taking Back Our Lives’ was a two-part series of talks and discussion in Hamburg and Berlin, Germany, 20 & 22 September 2009. Each event was attended by around 50–100 people. The Hamburg event was at the long-running anti-capitalist space ‘Rote Flora’, and the event in Berlin was at ‘Stadthaus Bocklerpark’, a popular sports hall entirely made of glass.

I’m really overwhelmed to be here with so many comrades. Apart from the beautiful setting... I think maybe it’s the first time anarchists have had a meeting inside a glass house... I think we need to examine for one second our expectations, why we’re here, because we live in a world of repetition and things also tend to repeat themselves with us in the movement. Perhaps we expect a comrade, especially of a certain age, to turn up and talk about their organisation and in some way hope to extend this organisation...

That’s not the case tonight. I’m just trying to communicate a few ideas within a context of ideas, because we’re anarchist—well, I’m speaking from an anarchist point of view, I’m not taking it for granted that everybody here is anarchist, but we obviously agree we have a common enemy—and for anarchists we don’t make a separation between ideas and action. For anarchists our ideas come from action. Our ideas are action and action, revolutionary anarchist action, is theory.

We think that language brings us together but language separates us. Yet we must try in some way, even more so at the present moment when capital has expropriated many of the terms that we use and taken them to empty them of meaning. In the same way as capital has taken our space it’s taken our time and our language, in other words it’s taking our lives. It’s taking our lives to sell back to us in the supermarket of identities: you can have an identity, you can’t have individuality. Individuals scare capital but identities are safe because they can interact.

The prevailing model of the present and going towards the future is the model of tolerance, reciprocal respect, respect for people’s rights and respect for people’s differences. But these differences must be homogenised into a series of diversities, not real difference that interpenetrates and colludes and

⁵Recorded, transcribed by comrades of 325 Magazine, some of the following pieces were published in issue 8 of the same

sparks off, like particles in a free reality of space and time. We must talk, this is another thing. We must keep talking and expressing our dissent. I'm talking about advanced capital, advanced post-industrial capital, totalitarian democracy if you like. This is the way it's moving and it's pretty far on but it's not entirely there yet.

I suddenly appear from another planet, outer space, and come here into a reality which many comrades in other parts of the world are looking to.. Berlin. And you see in Berlin a point of reference in the struggle also, a point of stimulus, a point that excites curiosity. How is it that comrades here are finding the way to move in this situation?

So I think that what we can aim for at this moment is, if possible, a moment of experimentation. This isn't intended to be a monologue because it depends on what we want. We're doing this together. We're not two fields, the one the speaker the other the passive audience, because we're anarchists. Also because I've just appeared from the heart of darkness, a country where, let's say, capital has moved on in a certain way, 4 million CCTV cameras in London and I would say that it's pretty far on in the objective of capital of social peace.

That's not what I've come to talk about but to try to open up some kind of discussion about what kind of methodology we can use at this particular moment in time. What it means to be an anarchist in this reality that we're living in now, in this what we might call historic moment. We don't privilege history over all the other facets of life but I think we can say we still have a foot in the old world and we are also partly into the new. We're in between. We still have certain faculties from the old world, the capacity to reason, to think, to make choices but we're being moved towards a technology, an organisation of capital, that's moving away from that to a flattening, so in a way we have to look for a moment at what's happened over the last few decades. And coming to Berlin you can actually see it. You can see before your eyes what's happened to capital over the last forty or fifty years.

Capital is moving out of these blocks, these very intensified blocks of exploitation where people were regimented into the factory and living areas within a very static perspective. The cold war, so-called, the existence of the movement, the workers' movement, we're not talking about the anarchist movement but the workers' movement in general. Years of intense struggle. First of all against work pace, assembly lines, for wage increases and so on, and then in the eighties the struggle moved towards one against the restructuring of capital when the factories began to close down, the mines began to close down. So we're living in a situation now where production, the production that Europe lives from: energy, automobiles, heavy industry... has moved very far away in the planet to countries like China, Asia, so these focal points in Europe of struggle have spread, they've dissipated.

brought down to size, simply, from the heart, far from the calculated deadly violence of police who step in, one of them almost murdering a demonstrator, smashing his skull with a truncheon.

Now, days later, it is the job of the lackeys of the regime to vomit out the latter's essence, VIOLENCE, in a twisted condemnatory accusation against the people whose lives are at stake now and in the future to come.

Perhaps a broken window in a high street store revealed the institutional violence of the sweatshops of Bangladesh that supply their trashy goods under the whip of starvation wages?

Perhaps paint on a riot cop's shield sparked the will to live, i.e. rebel, i.e. exercise one's physical and mental force in one's own interests, regardless of the threat of the blind institutionalised violence of the State?

Perhaps shouts of 'Off with their heads!' and the terror on the faces of the occupants of the cracked, paint-bespattered royal hearse jolted us out of the Disneyland of everyday 'life', giving a glimpse of a new/old wonderland, where vague historical images encounter vibrant hitherto undreamed dreams?

The Treasury, the supreme court?

No fortress is impregnable, the structures around us that affect our lives and rule the planet continue to exist thanks to consensus, ignorance or indifference, all conditions that are undergoing a radical upturning.

The detox has begun, we are flushing the State out of our veins!

So, in the words of an Angry Punk, found in a leaflet some time ago in the streets of London: SMASH YOUR TV, PISS ON YOUR NEWSPAPER, FIND THE PEOPLE THAT SHARE THE SAME HATRED AGAINST THIS SOCIETY AND ACT DIRECTLY AGAINST THE TARGETS!

London, 9 December 2010 – Thousands fight against exclusion and the death society in iconoclastic revelry¹⁴

A day not to be forgotten. A unique day, when a prominent fraudster and his spouse were brought down to size by the great leveler, FEAR, eloquently displayed on their ghastly faces when they found themselves surrounded by a quick-thinking body of demonstrators moving on from Parliament Square on December 9 2010. On bumping into Charles 'heir to the throne of Great Britain' and his jewel-bedecked consort arriving at the London Palladium for a Royal Variety performance, they seized the moment without hesitation. The road was quickly blocked and the couple, alone for a terrifying moment inside the family Bentley, became the target of irrepressible derision and rage. The vehicle was smattered in paint and back windows smashed as they were surrounded by hundreds of unchained 'subjects' in a scene of riotous mockery. Carpe diem!

London 9 December, 2010 — Thousands of young and not so young pour uncontrollably like mercury into Parliament Square to make themselves seen and heard. No fetishisation of the cops—they are simply ignored or got out of the way with the means at hand. Barriers intended to fence people in like sheep become a part of the improvised weaponry, thrown back from whence they came amidst music and laughter. ‘We kettled the cops, heh, heh, heh’. At one point a posse of mounted riot cops gallop into the crowd—there is no panic, and without fear to stimulate their adrenaline, they ride straight out of the compound. Meanwhile, impervious to the people’s solicitations, the democratic dictatorship—worthy servants of capital’s restructuring—press ahead in their contribution to the division of the world into included and excluded.

As the young people’s anticipation turns to rage, some of the symbols of greed and power (dead and alive) that infest everybody’s lives are derided,

At the same time, in certain countries including Germany there was also at the end of the seventies and eighties a huge movement of contestation, in some parts revolutionary. The movement had revolutionary perspectives and also possibilities. So for Italy, for example, in the eighties, four thousand comrades ended up in prison. Many of these comrades came from Marxist-Leninist structures and according to their analysis they had been approaching a moment that was possibly capital’s ‘final crisis’. But with the implosion of the clandestine groups and the massive repression—especially after the Moro kidnapping—mass arrests, many of the leadership decided that it wasn’t capitalism’s ‘final crisis’, that the revolution had failed, that it was no longer the revolutionary moment and in fact they were facing multiple life sentences and it was time to begin to negotiate with the State. Let’s face it, the revolutionary project of the Marxist-Leninists is obviously not the same as an anarchist projectuality of revolution. As you know they had a vanguardist approach and obviously had no intention of destroying the means of production and the State.

But while this struggle was taking place in 60s and 70s it was multiform, I mean it wasn’t just the clandestine groups that were carrying out the struggle but many actions took place in the sphere of illegality. These actions were carried out by very small groups of comrades and not claimed with acronyms.

At the same time there was mass illegality. Comrades and young people, unemployed, students, just refused capitalism, a direct refusal, a taking of life: going to a rock concert but not paying en masse, going to a restaurant and not paying, going on buses and not paying. But we could say that, although there’s always been a polemic in the movement between anarchists and Leninists or Stalinists etc. there was somehow a composite situation of attack against the common enemy. But after the mass arrests the waters began to divide, and this is because it was impossible to carry on solidarity with a movement that was in a position of negotiation with the State.

For the Leninists, the revolutionary ‘subject’ became the proletarian prisoner. So, in a way, a large part of the movement, that had been the revolutionary movement, the movement of contestation, was taking directives from inside the prison. It was in a situation of waiting and there were many rebellions inside the special prisons. But as time went on, more and more of this movement inside the prison was developing a whole series of nuances of dissociation from the revolutionary positions of before. And at this moment, a part of the anarchist movement—that part of the anarchist movement that was for violent attack on the State—began to express more articulate theory starting from the small actions that had already been taking place.

So this long explanation is to try to say where the roots are, because if we talk about insurrection—we can all see that all over the planet at the moment insurrections are breaking out in different places and we could say that there

¹⁴Angry news from around the world

is also something insurrectional in this city—I think the problem today is do we have a methodology that we can bring out, look at and intensify in order to make these insurrections conscious and also to provoke and stimulate insurrection. Because this gets us back to how reality has changed, how the whole set-up of capital has changed at the level of production.

When production was in these fixed enclaves, the factories, the methods tended to be that the exploited would join a movement in the quantitative sense of the word. There seemed to be strength in numbers. As capital progressed and restructuring took place thanks to the new technologies, there were quite intense moments of rebellion. Here it became obvious that the unions, although they put up a show—the classic example is the miners' strike in England—were actually participating in the restructuring of capital, not fighting against it. And if you look more closely, because that's what we're trying to do... I'm sorry, I come from outside and I don't know the dynamic within the movement here, I'm just talking on the basis of countries like England where things have gone to a certain level... in the movement in England against capital there's very little debate, there's very little examination of methods and the struggle is tending to take place more at the level of dissent: large demonstrations, large agglomerations of people but very little discussion of where the movement is going. The deadlines are there, sometimes the deadlines are presented by capital. The classic example is the summits. We're given these deadlines and we react to them.

And these can still be seen to be within the quantitative logic of large masses, large demonstrations, thousands of people, thousands of comrades. Different levels, obviously, of what each group intends to do when they get to the demo but nevertheless the demo is a circumscribed event. And a large part of the anti-capitalist movement actually has roots somewhere in this great about-turn that happened in the movement in some parts of Europe. This turning away from revolution but in such a way that it wasn't actually said clearly, because for some elements in the revolutionary movement who had a deterministic analysis in which the industrial proletariat was a key element, there was an interruption in the equation, it couldn't go on.

There are still masses of young people, young comrades, who are suffering the effects of capital, albeit in a different way. So the problematic for this reality was the mobilisation of these masses of young people who were suffering the effects of this new form of capitalism and alienation, and the extension of social centres over the territory that they saw as a point of reference. The big demonstration, the possibility to focus one's anger, one's alienation, to try to belong to something, because we all need to belong to something solid. They're not pacifists—many of them are—but they're not all pacifists. This came from the eighties but it's a process that's still in act.

chists and leftists will give a hand, no doubt.

Nothing will ever be the same after what has happened over the past few days. Our task is not to join forces with the recuperators but, using every means, to start to identify significant objectives and contribute to creating the conditions where the excluded, on whose backs they come into existence, can do something to destroy them.

We are moving into a phase of new, more brutal, more fascistic levels of repression with full consensus of reawakened, engaged citizens. The way has been paved for acceptance of the next stage in British neo-fascism, the Olympics and the related massive installations for surveillance and control.

The struggle against the existent continues, opening up new encounters and fields of experimentation to combine with the unyielding ingredients of all our interventions: affinity, solidarity and self-organisation of the attack.

plasma screens, trainers and fashion labels? The dividing line, which anarchists cannot stomach in spite of their heritage, is that the rebellious protagonists of the past days were not fighting for the noble cause of ‘freedom’ but were fighting for themSELVES. Selves alienated and stunted by the voracious reality they have been born into, spurred into action in an immediate assault on forbiddance. Now they are being demonised by those who should know better, for their lack of ‘political awareness’ and altruism. In such situations anarchists can only take stock and seek to put into action elements of a projectuality that is already being elaborated and experimented in small agile groups. What is evident from this flash-point of insurrection is that the anarchist movement, for want of a better term, here in Britain, is largely inadequate as to be insignificant in terms of the attack and the capability to prepare a line of flight beyond the existent, let alone during a mass riot.

If the uprising has caught us unprepared, if we have not already found our affinities, worked out our ideas and put into practice minimal attacks on the reality of dominion and class oppression, it is not from the ‘children of men’ that we will get the best indications to enter and extend the struggle. Anarchists risk being passive spectators, ‘provocateurs’, or simply clumsy gatecrashers of someone else’s party.

Some comrades have already begun the trajectory of their own projectuality, their own experimentation and attack, which has also materialised over these days alongside or within some of the attacks on the structures of the consumer god and its servants. Without flags, banners or high-sounding political claims. Others are asking themselves how to move in that direction, how to carry on now that ‘society’, the great myth, the centuries-old swindle adapted to the imperatives of the corporate cartels defended by their servants, government, cops and media, is being reasserted.

Now the party’s over, the CCTV footage is being analyzed, facial recognition software is being deployed, the snitches are queuing up for payment. ‘Wanted’ photos are being displayed on huge ‘digi-trucks’ driven throughout the cities. People’s doors are being smashed in by screaming gangs of riot cops wielding battering rams. Families are being given eviction orders in the old fascist ardor for collective punishment. Welfare payments are to be discontinued. Kangaroo courts are working 24/7 and the cell doors are slamming shut as the “community” is polarised in open conflict. Almost 2,000 arrests so far. Police and politicians argue the toss as to who subdued the battle and Twitter and Facebook have been saved from banishment by becoming the instrument of the good citizens. The broom has been stolen from the reprobate witch to become the symbol of citizenship as hundreds sweep and sweep in this neo Civil Defence corps.

The media and soft cops are hard at work to find the magic formula, the new superglue to hold together the untenable. On the margins, some good anar-

But it’s not because we express violence that we are necessarily moving towards revolution. It might be that capital in its need, as we said before, for participation and control, is offering moments of contained expressions of violence. In order to protect its real structural essence, it gives us a symbolic enemy. Because when it comes to it, the cop is a symbol of capital, it’s not capitalism, it’s an instrument of capital. The bank is a symbol of capital, money is a symbol of capital. If we attack in a destructive way, money becomes relative. If we arrive at touching communism directly, not State communism but real communism without hierarchy, without leaders, well then money disappears immediately. If we reach a point of the spread of insurrectional struggle that is actually destructive, the workings of capital and the State lose consensus. People move away from the State because they are organising their lives and their struggle directly. The cops are no longer guaranteed by the State and many of them run away because we know that they are cowards. They’re violent, they’re dangerous, they’re killers, but they’re also cowards... You don’t agree?

So, the problems that we now have on our plate, and these problems are pressing, they are urgent... We need to look at reality somehow, but with a minimal basic analyses of the reality that we are living in at the moment before our language has been reduced—because our language is being reduced everywhere. It’s being reduced in the schools. It’s being reduced in the social terrain. Many of the humanities, I don’t know in Germany but in England, are just being eliminated from studies. Science has completely sold out to capital, and very soon we won’t have the capacity to reason and will just become reactive.

We have two opposing elements, I would say, to face. The old element of quantity, that we must be many before we can move, before we can attack. So we’ve got quantity. Or quality. We have deadlines like the big demo, the summit, that are given to us, or the campaign. It might be in the realm of ecology or antinuclear, and again we have a choice: do we want to have the widest number of people, which sometimes means forming alliances with different kinds of groups, or do we want to go for quality in our struggle. Not because we don’t recognise that we also need quantity to fight capital, to attack and destroy capital.

This is also what we must decide, because not all anarchists want to destroy capital. In the past many anarchists thought that the project was to grow in quantity as a movement. The workers taking over the means of production and self-managing them without bosses or slaves, everybody equal: sort of libertarian, anarcho-syndicalism you might say.

There’s another part of the movement that wants the organisation. Our lack of strength is because we are not organised, we don’t have a strong organisation. And so the efforts of these comrades go into trying to consolidate this organisation to make it grow and increase in numbers before we can do anything

to attack, because we need the justification before we attack of the presence of the working class in our organisations.

But if we've already seen that the working class as a conscious class based in industry has disappeared, we see that this projectuality is destined to stay as it is. When we say that the working class has disappeared we're certainly not saying that exploitation has disappeared or that people don't work. But the class of producers on which the old revolutionary theories were based has moved. The main sector in Europe today is the tertiary sector, it's not production, it's a kind of managerial way of organising what is coming from elsewhere. And the services industry.

We are also exploited. That's also why we are here. But we are something more than exploited. We have ideas. We have a vision in some way of another world. We have a certain clarity in seeing how things are, the various parts of society. We have an analysis of power.

If we accept that we don't want this world, then we must destroy work because work is destroying not only humanity but also the planet, and in order to do this, we must also have quantity at a certain point in this project. So I think that the problem that faces us all today is how can we act immediately, without mediation, to attack what we know must be attacked and destroyed. And how we can become many. Who are our comrades? Do we look to the movement? Or the various ecology movements, etc. And of course some of our comrades are there, but how do we find them if we're not interested in forming a fixed organisation that's visible, with a name, with a fixed modus vivendi, a way of acting, a fixed pre-established way of acting.

We find our comrades by acting immediately in small groups, directly, trying to act against capital, but in such a way that this moment of attack can spread and multiply. It's easy to identify and it's easy to repeat. And these attacks need to be visible. Not only to our potential comrades in the movement, but to our far more potential comrades out there that we don't see. Maybe out there in this same building there are people who are our comrades. This is the point. There are people who are our comrades around us. All around us. In this city, any city, and in the country.

So how do we make contact with these comrades? These people are also in the hands of the forces of capital, the forces of the media and the police. Not only anarchists are attacked by the police. In fact there are attacks all the time on people who are anonymous, have no voice, and there are specific realities in recent years that have found the way to respond. But in a way these also attack the symbols of capital, attack the police because the police attack them and so they attack the police. Even if there's exhilarating violence that stimulates any rebel or anyone that wants the destruction of this world—when I say violence

individuals not adverse to controlling others.

On Wednesday August 10th the moment that power had been waiting for in some form or another occurs. Three young men defending local Asian-owned shops in Birmingham are killed when a car is rammed into them. An irreparable loss for those who knew and loved them, a great gain for power. The articulate appeal of one of the fathers in his heartfelt call for 'peace' (how many rivers of tears were spilled that day for sons killed by the capitalist moloch all over the planet) is relentlessly exploited by the class enemy, just as the resulting coming together of Sikhs and Muslims to defend their structures is depicted as a triumph of democracy. The fact that the divide and rule policy that characterises British power was instrumental in the partition of India and creation of Pakistan, an operation that resulted in over a million dead, has been erased from the annals of history. Rule Britannia! This Disney-like multicultural paradise is a fragile mosaic of erstwhile plundered peoples seeking to survive, living shoulder to shoulder each with their miserable prospects of inclusion or exclusion according to their capacity for collaboration, subservience, and self-mutilation.

One part of the equation that has been totally ignored over these days are the producers of the much coveted goods themselves. Crimes spring from fixed ideas. The sacredness of property is one of these ideas and is the crime par excellence that is dangled before the disinherited masses. Just as war is disconnected from murder in the psyche of the common man or woman, the plunder of the resources of the planet and subjection of the invisible producing slaves is totally absent from their diatribes about 'stealing' and 'looting'. What is a high street store in flames compared to the existence of the store itself? Every supermarket is a 'crime scene', MacDonald's and Coca Cola are veritable motors of mass destruction. After babbling sensational accounts of the riots from the teleprompter, the newsreader's disapproving frown erupts into a beaming smile as she announces the news that Apple has surpassed Exxon Mobile to become 'the world's most valuable company'. Wonderful Apple, such style, smart gadgets. Perhaps the searing profits should be put down to good management as we read in the daily press: The man now running Apple, Tim Cook, had a delicate job last year. After nearly a dozen workers committed suicide at Foxconn, a contract manufacturing plant in China, he flew to visit the company – and pressured them to improve working conditions. One move was to hang large nets from the factory buildings.

To see the recent events as something that do not concern anarchists and conscious rebels would be just as absurd as to simply take them at face value and join in the looting spree for a moment of quick gratification or to be 'in the reality of the struggle'. That doesn't mean staying at home safely out of the way of these amoral 'greedy' rioters. What can a movement of predominantly vegan, bicycle-riding anti-commodity anarchists or their moralising anarcho-workerist counterparts have to do with the pluri-appropriation of

overflowing with consumer goods.

Elsewhere, behind the hastily improvised barricades erected and set alight by local kids in back streets as they prepare to greet their daily enemy – the cops in their anti-riot vans – with a hail of bottles and stones, the outsider, immediately recognisable by age and colour, is viewed with suspicion. Who are you? What do you want? In various areas, the odd gang, spurred by the momentary shift in the balance of power in the streets, starts high-jacking people's cars and driving off in them or setting them alight, or trashing and looting corner shops, holding no attraction but for the benefit of diversionary chaos so that other small groups can organise and initiate their own attacks. For some, black clothes and face masks are a sign of organised illegality and command respect accordingly. Each area and particular environment creates differing possibilities and modes of co-operation and confrontation. Still days after the clashes there is a changed air in the glances and atmosphere between those in the different sectors of the clash, put under the same rule. Open fighting against the police and the system they defend is a unifying feature for popular resistance against all regimes. Very soon it became clear that this seemingly strange police tactic of standing by and watching looters empty stores was no accident, as it had already been reported by right-wing media that the police would let the situation play itself out for 3 days before going in with heavy repressive blows, a story which subsequently disappeared from the news. This standard British counter-insurgency tactic, developed in the colonies and in Northern Ireland, is used in the preliminary stages of the social insurgency to attempt to create a situation of havoc where all the contradictions of the mess of society can exacerbate, to force the false question: Do you want an authoritarian regime to maintain repressive order, or do you want 'lawless chaos'? The question is posed by power to the servile masses, using the rebellious as their spear of inquiry.

The police removed their personnel from the most seriously affected areas, giving space for the riot to literally burn out – letting the 'violence' reach such a point as to deny the intensification which could have resulted had the clash been kept at a certain social level, possibly drawing in anarchists, leftists and angry students.

The front line of the clash – that against cops, police stations, media, politicians, started to disappear as the target of these attacks withdrew or were overcome. This channeled the affray into the requisitioning of goods by uncontrolled masses. The design was to secure the forces of the police following their defeat on the streets in order to prepare the massive repressive operation from CCTV surveillance, snitching and investigation – and provoke a media-boosted backlash from those who identify with the system of work and law demanding that the police enforce a severe crackdown. A backlash which was not only seen in the posses of marauding shop-keepers and British nationalists, but also in the citizenist outcry for an open prison society by tidy controlled

I mean it in the positive sense of the word—at the same time, this is within a paradigm.

Where are we as anarchists when something breaks out in the banlieue? Do we join in the riot?—as uninvited guests? Or do we have some methodology already in course that can also take the riot as a point of reference but try to extend the struggle beyond the paradigm. When we find ourselves in a social situation of rebellion such as happened in Greece recently... The rebellion was in some way stimulated by the presence of anarchists in that territory before it happened, through the continuity of small actions carried out in the territory for months, maybe years before. For example, a number of anarchists had been attacking police stations and banks in small groups for a long time. And possibly when Alexis Grigoropoulos was murdered the great surge after the first two days—because from the Monday all the schools came out on strike, all the schools and colleges and started attacking police stations all over Greece: towns, villages, every police station in Athens, Thessaloniki... Ah, a question.... 'Not everybody that's fighting against the police is my comrade...before we talk about what to do the first step is with whom'. Ok, this is true, and we're going to have a discussion and this discussion obviously doesn't end here, it's a very big story. This is just opening... maybe that situation already exists here, that there is discussion among comrades.

I'll just try to say what I was saying about the mass attacks on the police stations all over Greece. Of course we know that it was a cop that murdered Alexis so that was also a reason. But we don't know how much the fact that anarchists, a minority of anarchists, had constantly been attacking police stations.. I mean what is spontaneity? It was a spontaneous rebellion but at the same time there were also objectives already known to people. They (the anarchists) had attacked banks. They burned banks, the large shops, the stores.

...A situation becomes overwhelming, there's a crowd, there's no longer a political demonstration in the streets where we all know who we are. There's a crowd of people where we don't know anybody... and this is a situation we're going towards if we want to destroy capitalism. We won't be in control. Ours is not a projectuality of control. We're living in a situation of control at the moment, self control to a large extent, of the movement.

So what is the role of anarchists in a mass insurrectional moment? Well, some end up protecting the anarchist structures against... this mass of people who have this great thrust. There's an intelligence where you have thousands of egos all acting together and it's self-organised at this point, nobody's organising it from outside. And that is what defines it, if you like, as an insurrection. But after a few days problems enter these mass social situations, they can either be repressed, or when the situation doesn't know where to go next, a leadership

can move in. But if we say that we need—and we are on the brink now—to attack and destroy what is destroying us and destroying the future, it's destroying the whole perspective of life for children and these children's children, then we must try to develop methods which enable us to extend the insurrection horizontally. And experiment methods that are not just based on objectives to be struck but which also have a minimal organisational, self-organisational, content.

So, this is the crux of the matter. What can we take from reality? As we said our theory comes from action. We can take the theory from the action that has been spreading from the seventies onwards, these small groups, and take them as an organisational model that we can apply, that we can use ourselves to attack capital directly. Because if we all agree on the urgency to attack capital, we don't have to wait for anybody. We don't have to wait for general consensus before we attack. But even if we are few we don't want to attack in the dimension of a vanguardist minority but using minimal organisational forms that can multiply. And this form, for lack of a better word, is the affinity group. So the affinity group—we're not talking about the affinity group in the activist milieu where hundreds, maybe thousands of people turn up on the basis of a deadline with a specific objective, possibly a demonstration, let's say within the sphere of symbolic attack (it's symbolic because it doesn't intend to go beyond the day of the action). So they need efficiency, they must act immediately and must be able to split up into groups and take various sectors. And people are invited to form affinity groups somehow.

Well, when we talk about affinity groups that's not what we mean. We mean groups of one, two, three comrades who decide to have reciprocal knowledge of each other. They want to go beyond this respect for rights, differences, of not asking too much about each other. And we talk, we say what we want to each other. We decide and we carry out an action. The action doesn't need fifty pages of explanation. It doesn't need to be signed with an acronym. It's not carried out in the name of the whole proletariat [laughter]. It doesn't synthesize the whole struggle and intend to carry on heightening the level of attack: today with some kind of homemade device, tomorrow with some firearms and next day with a machine gun, because the objective is to get closer to the enemy—which nearly always turns out to be the police.

But the affinity group realises itself in the action. And these comrades have transformed something, they've put together the minimal elements necessary to transform reality in some way, and in so doing also transformed something inside themselves, at the level of knowledge. Reciprocal knowledge and also the knowledge of what we are attacking, because it's only by attacking—what does a child do with its toys? It smashes the toy to get to know the toy—the only thing is that now children's toys are unbreakable, most of them, so even

cops in the head. Collective fury at this latest police murder combines with the daily bullying and humiliation of being stopped and searched, the moralising, the false promises, useless lives, no future, desire for status-affirming 'needs' unattainable due to increased taxes, unemployment and cutting of benefits, 4 million cameras, glaring security cops at the entrance to every store, the colonization of all remaining urban space by trendy bars filled with the noisy chatter of the carefree... that and much more that we don't know and will never experience welled up and fueled the will to smash through the invisible and plate glass barriers that hold everything in place.

The hostages of the open prison, the young people of the ghettos of London, rise up and the capitalists' nightmare finally materialises, as the last link in the consumer chain of submission snaps. It explodes into a free-for-all when, in a flash of illumination the solution to the existential dilemma is found: MUST HAVE/CAN'T HAVE = TAKE. It's simple: learn and apply, possibly burning store to ashes on retreating.

The rioting escalates, scores more people come into the area responding to call outs on twitter to come up and fight the cops and loot shops. Over the following days it spreads to many other parts of London and onward towards other cities.

The rage also spreads beyond the main clashes in Nottingham, Manchester, Bristol, Gloucester, Liverpool, Birmingham. In many incidents the stories escape categorisation or quantification. One thing sure that is not reported and deliberately ignored is the chiefly anti-authoritarian flavour to the uprising, the government and corporations relentlessly branding the people 'scum', 'thieves' and other low simple catchphrases of demonisation. The failure in this to stop young people identifying with the uprising is obvious when it is seen how quickly the riots replicate and need little trigger to begin breaking the Queen's peace. Mainstream media reporting becomes incredibly formulaic, and the bosses make mileage from their scenes of interest in reaching their political objectives, looping the same images over and over, overlaid with the stereotypical talking heads' condemnation and reassurance. The widespread disorder does not stop. The people who lost their fear go outside, collect themselves to attack and take as much as they can.

The police are overwhelmed and beaten by the small fluid groups who don't wait around to be crushed, but instead move quickly, spreading terror in those who can't identify themselves as belonging to the mob.

Some anarchists and 'rebels with consciousness' did rush towards the smoke signals on the horizon. For some only to stop in their tracks, in many cases riveted to the spot as spectators of a scenario never played out in their wildest dreams: crowds of young people queuing up outside high street stores like customers at the January sales, calmly forcing their way inside under the implacable gaze of rows of riot cops, to reappear later with huge bags, even trolleys,

UK, August 2011 – the struggle against the existent continues¹³

Written in the heat of the moment and posted in my now defunct blog Angry news from around the world, this article, a ‘work in progress’ was added to by 325 comrades, namely the paragraphs concerning the media, cop strategy and the UK anarchist movement, and published in 325 #9 and by the deeply missed Darko Mathers in August 2011 Revolt: Anarchy in the UK’ (Dark Matter Publications). It finds a place in the present compilation as it was a gut response to certain disparaging attitudes within the anarchist movement concerning the ‘greedy’ looters.

Thursday, August 4, Mark Duggan, a ‘real straight up and down respected man’ (words of London rapper, Chipmunk) from Tottenham in London, was blasted to death while on his way home in a cab by a mob of cops wielding Heckler & Koch MP5 carbines. 29 year old Mark, father of four young children, lived on the housing estate known as Broadwater Farm, a depressed predominantly Afro-Caribbean area. The area is infamous since the riot of 1985 after 49 year old Cynthia Jarrett collapsed and died of a heart attack as police raided her home. (During the riot a policeman, PC Blakelock, was hacked to death with a machete.) Today, in the words of a resident, ‘if you’re from Broadwater Farm, police are on you every day, you’re not allowed to come off the estate. If you come off the estate they follow you.’ They followed Mark Duggan and he ended up dead.

August 6 – The arrogance of the killers in uniform in the face of the protest by the victim’s family and supporters, plus the brutal attack on a 16 year old girl by police during the vigil was the last straw.

That night in Tottenham the police station was attacked, police cars set on fire, a double-decker bus ends up a twisted wreck after being engulfed in flames, press photographers are beaten and relieved of their equipment for the decades of lies they have propagated. Bank windows smashed. Countless shops looted, stuff thrown all over the streets. Young guys storm McDonald’s and start frying up burgers and chips. Indignant anger clears the brain, flushes out the

that’s fucked up.

So, basically, it’s only by acting that we get to know each other and that we get to know reality. Our unknown comrades can also see an indication for their struggle. Because we don’t want to bring these people into the anarchist movement, we want to go out from the anarchist movement with anarchist methods. By anarchist we mean antiauthoritarian: against authority, against hierarchy with this element of transformation and going towards a struggle which is permanent. It has the element of permanent conflictuality, self-management of the struggle—not of our lives, of our miseria—and attack.

So, the next point is the bridge between the individual actions of affinity groups and reaching the exploited on the basis of a specific struggle. This is what we could call an [insurrectionalist] intermediate struggle. It’s a struggle that is not the revolution but has one specific objective, which at that time these particular people are having to face in some way. It might be a nuclear power station, it might be a military base that’s about to be built. It might be a prison or a waste disposal unit that people are against or any of a myriad of things. And there will probably be many forces against this objective, not just anarchists. We’ll have the communist party, the socialist party the trades unions, the local syndicalists, whatever, all of these different components. But we move away from a ‘popular front’ kind of organisation, on the basis of a social analysis of what that problem means in the global sense—because that’s what makes the objective potentially revolutionary, the fact that we move away from the ‘single issue’ where the end justifies the means, and we move to the means. For us it’s the means that we use that are important in the struggle, not the end result, which is relative within the whole perspective.

So, we come out with our leaflets, with the means we have of all times: meetings, outdoor talks, talking to people about the way we see the social connotations of this fact, social, economic, etc. And we make an organisational proposal: for a base organisation if you like. A mass organisational proposal. By mass I don’t mean masses of people numerically, but mass in terms of ‘not political’, the absolute absence of any political party or union in this organisational form. So, we propose a kind of organisational entity and at this point in the struggle we’re not talking to masses of people. We’re talking to the few people who have already eliminated the unions as a point of reference in their struggle, as well as the political parties. They want to struggle directly.

At this point we don’t hide the fact that we are anarchists. We are anarchists but we’re not trying to make these people become anarchist in the sense of belonging to the anarchist movement. We want to give, and alongside them use, anarchist methods, which means that they must be self-organised. They must hold on to their self organisation but be able to relate to the other self-organised elements in the same struggle, without having to mediate this through some

¹³(work in progress) Angry news from around the world

kind of fixed organisational entity. Even an anarchist group. And we must keep our eye on the objective to be destroyed. Obviously, we are in an area where people are unemployed. Maybe they don't have housing, it's where the worst social discomfort exists. But we must keep our concentration on the objective to be destroyed. And it's in working together that these minimal organisational entities can suddenly contain hundreds of people from one day to the next. They're like a lung, they can suddenly contain thousands of people and hopefully move to the attack. And it's this attack that can go beyond the objective, and the struggle extend.

Well, I'm afraid this has been very difficult to articulate, to try to give a coherent kind of vision if you like of a proposal of struggle which perhaps already exists, I mean I don't know the situation here. Maybe you're saying, well, you know, that's old stuff, we're beyond that.

And there are other very important elements in the way capital is going that I haven't mentioned because it's too vast, such as the included and the excluded. The included in the project of capital and the masses of excluded who are excluded for ever from the privileges of capital.

The exponential growth of technology, how certain advances—call them advances. Now it's the technology itself that is able to do many things much faster. The control of social reality moving from the enclaves, like we mentioned, the factories, the prisons, the asylums, to the whole of the territory including our language and reducing our language. And the fact that these technologies are actually penetrating our bodies now. They're not just external.

We're moving away from the closed structure of the prison because in the prison society, the people whose behaviour is not compliant with the capitalist project are too many to be held in one closed structure. The technology is almost there to control huge masses of people in specific areas and keep them within that area, and, as we said before, this technology of control is objective but it's also subjective because soon we won't have the language to move out of certain ghettos. The ghettos will be defined also by that, by lack of language.

And last, but not least, is the fact of the availability of the resources that capital is actually using at the moment. It's finite, it's not unlimited. For example, energy. The energy resources such as oil are drying up, they're not going to last for ever and capital is going to have to find new energy forms. And the transmission of these forms will surely affect the whole territory that we're living in. The militarisation of the whole territory.

Also, as we know, the planet is receding, the areas for producing food are diminishing. Countries like China with a huge population that they can't feed have already moved into certain African countries and leased out huge areas of land, taking their own slaves, to feed their population. So we're moving towards

media with figures in billions while they are struggling to stay alive and feed their children, Revolutionary Struggle has had considerable impact on those who see the crisis not as something that has to be re-addressed and corrected, but faced head on and destroyed, along with work and the whole economy. Poverty will never be eliminated until we destroy work because it is the condition that forces people to spend their lives doing soul-destroying jobs at starvation wages.

Millions of young people all over the planet are made to feel useless and without hope due to spreading unemployment. It's time to destroy work as a very concept and take back our lives. Work is a crime, an ideological and physical imposition on the great mass of human beings, animals, and the earth itself, for the benefit of a small percentage of glitterati, but believed in and defended by the whole social set-up, exploiters and exploited alike. In the words of Herman J. Schuurman one of the founders of the Mokergroep, a group of young proletarians in 1923 wrote this: We want to create as free people, not work as slaves; therefore we will destroy the system of slavery. Capitalism only exists because of the work of the workers, thus we will sabotage it and put an end to it. If we are not working towards the destruction of capital, we are working towards the destruction of humanity! We do not want to be destroyed by capitalism, so capitalism will have to be destroyed by us. I don't know if the Revolutionary Struggle comrades are advocating the destruction of work, but that is where the totality of the struggle for the destruction of the existent takes us, without compromise or half measures.

first their targets were symbols of authority and the State—police, the American Embassy, the Ministry of Finance and Labour, and also an attempt on the minister for Public Order who had been responsible for upgrading the repression. They acted directly without needing the alibi of the masses in order to strike the common enemy, for their own dignity and coherence. When in 2008 the so-called financial crisis became official along with the responsibility of the State and the banking corporations, their actions turned to financially-related targets such as the Stock Exchange, Citibank, Eurobank, etc.

During the whole period the group published extensive analyses which were combined with their actions and contained a strong class position, exhorting the class of exploited to rise and attack those responsible. They are a part of this new complexive reality of the struggle against capital and the State, one that is pushing towards a self-organised revolutionary outlet. Their choice of armed struggle in the specific sense is not presented as an end in itself but simply as a tool to bring the revolutionary perspective to the fore and present the hypothesis of the need for immediate attack in an unequivocal discourse addressed both to the anarchist movement and the wider movement of the exploited.

The comrades who have claimed responsibility for this organisation are individuals who have been active fighters in the struggles of the anarchist movement in Greece in its many forms for decades and are well known in the movement and beyond. In the face of the media outrage and scare-mongering following their arrests they came out and proudly claimed the organisation, decriminalising it in the face of the terroristic attack of the media on the minds of the population in order to prepare the terrain for consensus and support for their political and physical annihilation at the hands of the repressive organs of the State. They have written volumes explaining the reasons for the attacks and the need for social rebellion particularly at this moment where, as in many other parts of Europe and the world, the organised crime of State, bosses and banks has led to further extortion from the dispossessed who are now at breaking point. Their message is that of the need for direct attack, that the structures of capital and the State are not invincible.

The words and the actions of the Revolutionary Solidarity group [eh, you mean the Revolutionary Struggle? interpreter] of the Revolutionary Struggle group, (yes... it's the same thing... solidarity is the struggle and the struggle is solidarity...) have been translated into many languages in the dimension of the continuation and intensification of revolutionary solidarity in the dimension of attack. This has led to multiform actions, from banner-hanging, sabotage, incendiary attacks on banks and the structures of repression, discussions, international meetings, publications, posters, etc. and have been one of the recent sources of inspiration to anarchists everywhere.

At a time when life has been mortgaged to Capital and become little more than a question of accountancy where every day people are bombarded by the

a reality where the moving of food and the feeding of populations will become militarised because more and more people are going to be starving. So, hence the urgency about what we're saying.

We are in a moment—okay, as anarchists we say that we don't take history as our point of reference—but I think that we could say we are in a historical moment where we also have a challenge facing us because I think that anarchists are the only people who have in our hearts the desire for freedom. And we have the sense of totality, which is what we take into each small action that needs to be done. We take the sense of totality.

I just want to say this has been a very artificial if you like, an artificially contrived moment starting off with one person talking. That's obviously not the way that one wants to continue but to open some kind of possibility for something that can continue in time, examining and possibly experimenting certain ideas.

Passion for Freedom⁶

So, how is it that you found yourself arrested on September 19, 1994, with four other anarchists (Antonio Budini, Christos Stratigopoulos, Eva Tziutzia and Carlo Tesseri) and accused of an armed robbery at the rural bank of Rovereto (Serravalle), Italy? How did your life evolve to lead to this situation?

How did I find myself arrested that day of September 19, 1994? ... Well, it obviously wasn't 'the perfect crime' ... a couple of local people saw some guys jump over a fence into the forest in the Chizzola mountains; a massive 'man-hunt' ensued, and within a few hours everybody was rounded up. But I don't think that's what you mean. You ask me how my life had evolved leading up to that moment. I'll try to answer that question, which seems to imply that this was some kind of climax that my life had been heading towards.

Actually it's not like that. If things had gone differently and we hadn't been caught, no one would ever have known about the event. It would simply have been 'a day in the life' of a few anarchist comrades.

I don't think that there's anything exceptional about anarchists deciding to take back some of what has been stolen from us all—we have to face the problem of survival like all the other dispossessed and moreover we are not prepared to simply 'survive' but want to go beyond the limitations of poverty and act on reality. Some comrades believe that expropriation will be a mass event where all the exploited will act together one great day, others are not prepared to wait to infinity for that to happen, or to spend the whole of their lives being exploited or participating in the exploitation of others.

Looking back in time, what was exceptional was the fact of having comrades with whom it was possible to discuss anything and possibly act together as a result. I say exceptional, although at that time it was normal.⁷ This deepened knowledge of one another (and oneself) is the fruit of being in a common struggle—demos, meetings, discussions, actions, etc.—in the dimension of an informal anarchist movement. Relations between comrades deepen, one gains real knowledge of one another, not just our goals but the way we are as individuals, the way we react, our strengths and weaknesses. From there I think it is natural for comrades who know and trust each other to go into certain ques-

exploited in any attempt they have made to self organise their attack against oppression, and we saw this the other day in South Africa when 27 miners were gunned down in a demonstration against the conditions in the mine.

In the space of a century and a half the number of anarchists who have been imprisoned, exiled, guillotined, garrotted, electrocuted, tortured, gunned down in action, shot by firing squads, beaten to a pulp in the street and left to die in a cell, pushed out of police station windows or killed in traffic 'accidents', add up to thousands, and often the written word of the anarchist revolutionary has been as severely punished as the bullet. Far from showing signs of penitence or begging for mercy these proud fighters faced death as they had faced life, fearlessly, with a proud cry of Long live anarchy! Long live freedom! That is why the exterminatory delirium of the State is a battle lost before it begins. For every anarchist and rebel slain by the State thousands more spring up out of the nowhere of the uncertain and the undecided. And that was visible in 2008 in this country, something which inspired people all over the world. Every second an anarchist spends in prison his [or her] spirit strengthens, expands beyond the walls and nourishes the solidarity that he or she inspires.

The anarchist struggle is qualitative not quantitative. Its aim is not to control and lead the masses into battle or act in their place but to push the exploited and excluded to act in first person to attack the class enemy and its structures. Sometimes it's the other way around, a mass explosion of rage erupts after some exalted lackey of the State takes the law into his own hands and guns down a schoolboy, a rioter, a respected elder in the ghetto or a kid in the banlieue. When anarchists put themselves alongside the exploited it is not as their saviours but to fight together with them to extend and widen their attack, to turn riots into insurrections. Sometimes reality acts the other way, the rebels surpassing the anarchists in their destructive fury. In recent years in Greece and in many parts of the world there has been a proliferation of direct attacks on the structures of capital and the State by small groups or individuals. Unlike the seventies and eighties when capitalism was undergoing ferocious restructuring that was responded to in part, not only, by highly structured marxist-leninist armed struggle groups, from the nineties the attack has taken a more flexible form by anarchist groups based on affinity, often with no name or acronym. The workerist element of the struggle more or less disappeared along with the industrial working class due to the introduction of robotisation and real time operations thanks to information technology and capital's resulting ability to exploit starvation wages on the other side of the planet.

The armed group Revolutionary Struggle appeared in 2003 at a time when there was an anti-terrorist frenzy globally, which in Greece coincided with the capture of the 17th of November group followed by true media delirium. At

⁶Interview with 325 Magazine

⁷This is an affirmation of how I felt personally at the time of writing. Of course the search for affinity is lifelong, and, when one finds one's comrade or comrades in affinity, not always simple, the time is forever ripe.

with their own means, each with their own responsibility.

Armed struggle is on trial. Anarchists also. For any struggle to be worthy of the name it must be armed and self-organised, far from any delegation to the self-proclaimed representatives of the workers movement who have shamelessly betrayed the latter and collaborated with the bosses by reigning in the bad passions of those who have nothing to lose but their chains. Anarchists are against hierarchy and this also applies to the weapons used in the struggle. The weaponry of the anarchist combines the idea, the concept of freedom and the need to destroy not only inequality and poverty but also and at the same time, authority, hierarchy and obedience. They have the capacity to organise themselves and go to the attack without leaders or led, and push others to do the same. Words, stones, pistols, fire, dynamite, Molotov cocktails, graffiti, sledge-hammers, hacksaws, theory, analysis, identification of the class enemy as it changes in order to stay the same, machine-guns, spray cans, bazookas are some of the weapons for the self-management of the attack.. (I forgot the catapult..) All combine in destructive playful alchemy far from the deathlike logic of judgement. Even when a class enemy is struck down, it is just something to be done and let's get it over with. Anarchists abhor the blind institutionalised violence of the State with its arsenal of uniformed robots, tasers, tanks, drones, poisonous gases, flash grenades, truncheons, jackboots, armoured vehicles, cctv cameras, helicopters flying over our heads, courts, prisons, concentration camps, bomber planes, missiles, institutionalised religion, the media, the manipulation of people's minds, etc. Only the State has the power to send men to their death or to kill, always with the blessing of the priest, after instilling them with patriotism and xenophobia from birth. Greece was the first country to use napalm against the guerrilla in the mountains. Now, irony of history, it uses nerve gas imported from the Israeli State which, after evicting millions of Palestinians from their homes to survive in camps, claims its legitimacy from the gassing of 6 million Jews by another State over half a century ago.

Anarchists are against prisons even for their enemies and know well that when the present setup of the means of production is destroyed and social wealth belongs to everyone, to each according to their needs, from each according to their desires, there will be little cause for strife. The State will do anything to obstruct the struggle for freedom in whatever form it takes, whatever instrument it uses. Since the beginning of the anarchist movement around the middle of the nineteenth century the organs of power have always reacted particularly violently against anarchists because the State, any State, be it red, black or the multicoloured version of social democracy, cannot tolerate freedom, be it in the form of ideas or in the self-organised action of the exploited. I could give many examples but I think we are short of time and I'll carry on. And of course not only anarchists have been massacred by the State but the

tions more deeply and decide to experiment in order to push their struggle forward and open up new possibilities in whatever field.

For anarchists the absence of hierarchy also concerns action. When carried out in a projectual dimension with a real tension towards freedom, the validity of any one kind of action depends on the existence of all the others.

The media and the Italian State whipped themselves into a frenzy over the trial, but how was your experience of the solidarity from other anarchists and rebels during the legal process and during your prison sentence?

Actually, the thing developed into two trials .. no three. First there was the trial for the robbery in question, then we were accused of two other robberies in the area, so that led to a second one (which went on for many months), during which the 'pentita' ('repentant terrorist') matured, leading to the infamous 'Marini trial'. The local media did go into a frenzy immediately following the Serravalle (near Rovereto) robbery: all of the elements of the media cocktail 'terrorist scare' were there; foreigners, anarchists, guns, robbery, etc... But that was nothing compared to what was to happen subsequently, at the national level.

The reaction of the anarchists of Rovereto and the surrounding area was immediate and unconditional. Their solidarity was passionate and also ludic at times. They claimed the identity of the arrested comrades, defending our identity as anarchists within an articulate denunciation of the role of the banks and the validity of robbing them, through posters, leaflets, demos, public meetings etc.

Shortly after our arrest, the anarchist fortnightly Canenero was born. I think it is fair to say that, although it might have come out at some later date, for various reasons our arrest was a catalyst in its appearance then. Its eagerly awaited pages and the knowledge that comrades very close to me were working day and night to bring it out was a brilliant light that illuminated that initial period in jail. So many other things happened, it's hard to put everything down on paper. Right from the start anarchists came from all over Italy for the trials, the courtroom was always full and sometimes there were too many comrades for everybody to get inside.

I remember the huge 'Baci' (kisses) and encircled 'A' that appeared written in lipstick on a window overlooking the court after those who hadn't been allowed in occupied a building opposite and sent their greetings down from above... the news that over 150 cash points in the area had been glued, resulting in one of the banks withdrawing their claim for damages... the banner conveying birthday greetings unfurled in court when one of the hearings coincided with my birthday...

Flares and fireworks were set off against Trento prison during one of the hearings in the town court, resulting in a number of comrades getting expulsion orders from the area. While I was being held in the maximum security prison

of Vicenza, a terrible dump, particularly the women's section, comrades hired a coach and did an impromptu demo with flares, banners and paint-bombs at New Year, an action that wasn't without risk because Vicenza was in close proximity to the American NATO base. I learned when I got out that everyone had a good time and went on to party throughout the night somewhere in the mountains. Next day a police helicopter appeared in the women's exercise yard, and remained there until the day I was transferred to Opera prison in Milan.

That demonstration of love and solidarity was a contribution to getting me thrown out of a disgusting place without any ingratiating 'letters to the prison governor' or such like.

These are some of the moments that stand out in my mind concerning the initial period. Later, following the invention of a 'repentant' 'ex-militant' of an invented armed gang that we were all supposed to belong to, many comrades were arrested or went into hiding to carry on the struggle. I know that many of the remaining comrades debated intensely to agree and decide what to do, but I don't know as much about that period as I do about the preceding one.

Reading your questions has taken me back to these not so far off times, and remembering the solidarity fills me with an immense glow. It was amazing. Only someone who has lived through similar moments can understand what I am talking about, and as you can see, I can't squeeze the answer to this question into just a few lines, even although anything I mention is only a tiny part of what comrades were doing day after day, for years.

An anarchist defence committee that had been formed earlier became extremely active in finding lawyers, coordinating contributions from benefit gigs, etc, and sending out regular news of the whole situation, which was to develop into a complex repressive attack against a large part of the anarchist movement.

The comrade who sent the money orders was accused of being 'treasurer' of the phantom organisation invented by public prosecutor Marini along with the Carabinieri special forces, and a warrant was issued for his arrest. The comrade who bore the brunt of the committee's activity was accused of counterfeiting an internal police note that was sent to Radio Blackout in Turin. Both were subsequently acquitted or had charges dropped.

Throughout the various repressive phases thousands of posters were printed and flyposted in all the major towns and cities, and also in many small villages—wherever there were anarchists who wanted to show their solidarity.

From being a straightforward question of a few comrades 'caught in the act' about which there is little to be said, the thing had evolved into about 60 anarchists being accused of belonging to a clandestine organisation, insurrection against the State, etc., with charges that carried multiple life sentences.

Everything stood on the 'confessions' of the twenty year old girlfriend of Carlo, one of my co-arrestees, who had been singled out by the ROS (Reparto Operazioni Speciali / Special Operations Group) as potentially being someone

and the gaoler is an unusual if unintentional declaration of truth. The judge is nothing without the gaoler. The gaoler is nothing without the judge. They are one and bear equal responsibility for their actions. Terrorists and criminals are the servants of the State and capital, not those struggling to survive or fighting against a world of strife, war, poverty and oppression.

It is in the context of this struggle that I first heard of the anarchist Nikos Maziotis. He was in the extreme and dangerous phase of a hunger strike to enforce his refusal to wear a uniform and become a killer in the pay of the State. At the time many anarchists in Italy, where I was living, had also refused to do military service, choosing to go to prison rather than join the armed force that keeps humanity divided into classes and intervenes violently to extinguish any attempt at liberation. But also and above all because military service is one of the State's weapons for building model citizens devoid of personality, individuality and their own way of thinking against which it is necessary to rebel and refuse.

I was already aware of the anarchist struggle, of the importance of the anarchist struggle in Greece alongside the exploited, the students, the bus drivers, schoolteachers, the people of the villages of Halkidiki, etc and had read inspiring reports of their actions and also about the State repression against them. But it was Nikos Maziotis, who without knowing it, was to be the propulsive element in my coming to Greece in person. It was on the occasion of his trial in 1999 that I came to Athens for the first time, to attend the court in solidarity with him. It was then that I discovered the wild beauty of the Greek anarchist comrades, their passion for freedom that found immediate expression in a thousand ways and never ceases to grow and intensify, inspiring and igniting free spirits all over the planet. Two things in particular impressed me on that occasion. First and foremost the unmitigated courage and dignity of Nikos Maziotis as he faced the perpetrators of power and privilege. His statement to the court, his affirmations as a man, an individual, a revolutionary, an anarchist, were made looking into the barrel of the gun of judgement without any concern for the consequences in terms of the years he was facing locked up in a cell. What he said that day is a classic of anarchist theory concerning the need for violent attack on the class enemy in first person and I personally have contributed to spreading it in the English language (the text, I mean, hopefully also the attacks). It has inspired comrades and rebels all over the world. What also impressed me and has affected my life ever since was the immediacy of so many comrades' action in solidarity, without mediation, without the taboos about so-called violence that put a brake on the just anger of the exploited. They expressed solidarity in its only authentic manifestation, by continuing the struggle, the conscious attack on the profits of the bosses and the instruments of repression, even and above all when the class enemy was out in all its force to protect the property and arrogance of the rulers of the planet. Each

Athens, the Revolutionary Struggle trial: Statement to the terror court of Korydallos¹²

JUDGE: Are you going to make a religious oath or a political one?...

JW: I've come here to say what I have to say. I don't have to swear...

JUDGE: By the law it's like this you must swear to say the truth. But if you want you, you can say that by your own honour and conscience you will say the truth.

JW: I shall say what I have to say.

JUDGE: Can you tell us why you are here?

JW: Yes, I'm here because I was invited by the three comrades of Revolutionary Struggle to speak as a witness...

I wish to clarify right away that I stand here as an enemy of the State and society. Far from being a lively community sharing social well-being and the joy of life, what is referred to as society is no more than the dull organisation of inequality and exploitation through social roles and forbiddance. The law is the barbed wire that holds everything in place, and has been internalised to such an extent that it forms the unconscious basis of daily habit and routine even for those who apply it. The media form opinions to maintain consensus and the delegation of individual responsibility to that organ of institutionalised terror, the State. The State, which includes its subjects, is at the basis of every social relation at the present time, including the one here in this court today.

I have come to stand face to face with the enemy inside this bastion of State terror because I was invited by the three comrades of Revolutionary Struggle. I haven't come to enter into dialogue concerning these comrades or any others. My presence here is an act of solidarity and a continuation of my struggle as an anarchist. At least the present judicial proceeding has discarded every vestige of the democratic swindle, revealing the true essence of power. It's impossible to pass over the fact that this trial is taking place inside a prison, the greatest crime perpetrated by man over man, and the physical proximity of the judge

young and impressionable that could be scared into collaborating with the police and judiciary. She announced that she was an 'ex-member' of the 'gang', and had participated in one of the robberies in the Trento area. The way the story emerged was so absurd it was almost laughable, but things began to get quite serious—there were hundreds of raids all over Italy and many comrades ended up in prison, some went on hunger strike and were released. There was a wide denunciation of this frame-up against anarchists, which had now become a main news item: endless meetings, attacks on the press, the entrances to underground stations glued on the first day of the Marini trial, demos, itinerant exhibitions, etc. etc.

Over and above the arrests, there was a total distortion of anarchist methods, and tens of thousands of pamphlets were printed and distributed all over the country denouncing this. Many actions took place, and leaflets and posters were now being drawn up at national level, following countless meetings with groups and individuals from all over the country. There were regular interventions on free radios. Actions of solidarity also took place in Germany, Greece and Spain. A German comrade⁸ brought out a bilingual paper, translated many Italian texts—theoretical texts I mean, not related to the repression and organised benefits and meetings. She was also very close to me throughout the years I was inside in many ways. I also received many letters, telegrams, cards, conveying good wishes, passion, colour, solidarity from comrades in many countries, including the UK.

Can you tell us about your experience of prison and the conditions, opportunities for rebellion, etc? How was your relationship with the other prisoners?

Another big story... Where to begin...? Well, for a start, I wasn't in just one, but seven prisons over these years, and spent much of the time being shunted up and down handcuffed in a prison van between Milan and Trentino, squinting through the pinholes in the metal windows to catch a glimpse of the mountains or the orchards in bloom, as the trial in Trento ran its perverted course. The conditions in each of these prisons were fairly specific and varied immensely. But there are some factors that are peculiar to all women's prisons—they are a lot smaller than men's, and often have far fewer facilities, sometimes to the point of zero, for educational or recreational needs.

The first thing that struck and annoyed me was that I was alone, I mean, I was held separate from my comrades, who for much of the time were sharing

⁸Daniela Carmignani, known to English-speaking comrades through her now iconic introduction to *Revolutionary Solidarity* (Elephant Editions), worked assiduously throughout the period of the 'Marini frameup', producing *DieLunte, Ausbruch/Outbreak*, as well as publishing anarchist pamphlets in Germany. Since her death following a long illness, these publications seem to have disappeared completely. Having known the inside of a prison cell herself, Daniela's solidarity was passionate and unwavering. This is more than evident in her many letters during our correspondence and for this reason I have now decided to translate and publish some of them, a testimony of her rebel warmth and solidarity.

¹²10/09/2012

a cell, so had ample opportunity to talk, laugh and generally face the situation together. Eva and I were kept apart and fortunately she was released a month or so after our arrest. I'd been in similar situations before, so I knew the score and mustered my strength. The solidarity from outside that I have mentioned at length certainly nourished that strength, but there were many things going on within and around you that you would have liked to discuss with your own comrades, and that was impossible. I mean, even concerning some of the trivia in prison, or rather everything is trivia, but can be heavy at times.

Reverberations from the proverbial 'butterfly's wing' can do full circle at any instant, like an iron boomerang and even one's thoughts seem to take on (or perhaps they have it anyway) a solid capacity to act on reality I think that simply staying alive, holding to one's individuality and keeping one's spirits—and head—high is in itself a form of rebellion in the context of an institution that is deliberately built to put people down and humiliate them. Things were very different then compared to what they had been in the seventies and eighties in Italy when there were thousands of comrades in prison, often held in custom-built maximum security prisons. Rebellion was a constant, a necessity and a continuation of the struggle outside, almost taking the place of it before the reformist about-turn of many of the Marxist-Leninist leaders set in.

Today, especially if you are a woman, you might be very few in number, inside for any one of a whole variety of reasons (better—anarchists don't declare themselves political prisoners, and if they end up on 'political' wings it's because the State puts them there to prevent them from 'infecting' the other prisoners). In fact, in some of the small prisons I was held in, starting from Rovereto, I was kept separate from the other prisoners as far as the limited conditions allowed. The screws weren't used to seeing the leaflets that arrived in my post and their hands would literally shake upon coming in contact with some of them and I was transferred from there as fast as they could.

The only thing I remember about Trento prison is an earthquake one night following which I spent the next hour or so trying to decide what to do in anticipation of another tremor until I fell asleep. Not all such events have a happy outcome... 8 prisoners (and two female guards) were killed, trapped in a fire that broke out in Le Vallette women's prison in Turin in 1986. Accounts of prisoners in New Orleans make the blood curdle in horror, to mention but a few. We must never forget that—beyond the anecdotes and reminiscences, prison consists of so many reinforced boxes that millions of people all over the world are locked up in day and night. The latter are hostages of the State and live at the mercy of a hierarchy of vile cowards 24 hours a day.

The female wing in Trento was closed down and I was dispatched to Vicenza, which I mentioned above. The women's section consisted of two rows of cells facing each other. In the morning the heavy iron doors were opened, leaving a second barred gate locked. And that was the 'prison condition' for

one moment of revolution we are aiming at moments of insurrection, which are partial moments without being complete, this is more to the point.

This was also attempted in the moments in the 80s during the struggle against American cruise missile bases in Sicily, Italy. This became also an intermediate struggle. Again we don't have time now to explain fully, but this is a moment in time when anarchists in Italy attempted in those years to activate an insurrectional struggle. This time the intention was to create organisms created by anarchists but adopted by people who were not anarchist, because the essence of insurrectionary struggle is taking back our lives and our actions without delegating the struggle to anyone. Not to an armed group nor a trade union.

To close, when we are looking for our accomplices in the struggle, we need to look beyond the movement, to the exploited in society, this 'thing' called 'society'. Not to draw them into the movement but to push them to attack.

I'm sorry if I have strayed from the topic of the historical reality of the armed struggle, but I find it difficult to look at reality in a purely historical dimension and I realise that the intervention in terms of the language and translation has been incomplete.—This is because there isn't an answer, there are questions and propositions that we need to look at and experiment with.

Our point of reference must always be the destruction of this world, which is based on work and exploitation. To enter the adventure of freedom, where the means of survival belong to everyone. To each according to their needs, from each according to their abilities, desires and without coercion—or moral pressure which also must disappear from this world!

Let's work with whichever method we desire to destroy the existent!

Let's destroy the spectacle of representation and I'll be the first to break the microphone!

a communist-syndicalist went to speak to the students in the occupied university of Rome, he was chased out of the university, and this was a moment of liberation for many, many, young people.

When later, a young member of Lotta Continua, Francesca Russo, was killed, there was a massive rebellion in the streets and the rebels were smashing the gun shop windows, arming themselves and shooting the cops. The whole of these years—I don't know if they have been recorded in Greece or not but they are worthy of examination, because these moments were happening in a time of [capitalist] restructuring, which has now taken place. All the heavy industry of FIAT and the other productive centres were closing down, thousands of men were redundant, thousands of young people realised they had no future in the terms of the capitalist society.

For the closed clandestine organisations, the moment had come; for the Red Brigades, for example, the question became: "Either enlist, or desist", meaning "Join the organisation—or stay at home and watch us". This led to a massive situation of enrolment in the organisation, which contributed afterwards to a collapse not only of the organisation but the whole concept of revolution and attack. It has already been mentioned that there were 4000 comrades in prison, and the State found the way to get a profession of desistance: "pentiti"—repentance and denunciation of the struggle. To get back to Azione Rivoluzionaria, it was a very interesting attempt to do something different. To quote them: "The movement does not put off the class struggle but takes it on in first person. What we want is to carry out a destructive critique of the State with the use of revolutionary violence. Armed struggle, propaganda by the deed. We want to hasten the time and widen the internal front of the clash in order to reach a destabilization of the State. Armed struggle is the only force credible of making any project today. Create, organise, 10, 100, 1000 armed nuclei... Ours is a revolutionary organisation in which we meet at an informal level, on the basis of various different ideas and experiences of differing comrades." ... The existence of this group within the movement at the time, stimulated a part of the anarchist movement to make a critique of the armed struggle method. This critique was put into practice a decade later in the 80s, in the form of affinity groups; in this case against the nuclear industry in Italy. Many of the actions consisted of sawing down pylons, but these actions were not explained in communiques, rather the anarchists were present in their critique of the big demonstrations and campaigns, in their own meetings and interventions. The essence of this methodology is that there is not one apocalyptic moment when revolution will occur as a result of a crisis of Capital. "Crisis" is one of the mechanisms of Capital, which undergoes recurrent crises.

These crises lead to increasing discomfort, which lead to rebellion and organisation. They also lead to a proliferation of reformist groups that aim to alleviate the distress of the exploited. So, if we say, rather than aiming towards

the rest of the day. Pale thin girls spent their whole days in bed because, although there was an exercise yard, it was freezing cold outside (Vicenza is in the mountains). The exercise period is established by parliamentary decree but nowhere is it written that there is a 'minimum stay'. An obligatory two hours in a huge freezing cold area of reinforced concrete with nothing to do was too much for most people, and the screws were quite happy to forego the task of looking and unlocking x number of gates of access.

So, the battle began, at first the 'good' way, pointing out the situation to medical staff, writing collective demands to the governor, etc., to no avail. It was very difficult to talk to the other prisoners as, apart from the outside yard, there was only a couple of hours 'sociality' each day that had to be signed up for in advance, naming one other prisoner who could be locked in with you, or whom you could 'visit'.

Nonetheless, we all managed to agree that we would go out into the yard next day and, in protest, would refuse to enter when the two hours were up. This, in the context of prison, is tantamount to insurrection. The day came. The presence of the screws from the male section downstairs, was confirmation that everybody's plans had been thwarted. Shortly afterwards (this was in the period immediately following the New Year demo) my cell neighbour C. and I were 'ghosted': me to the 'political wing' in Opera, Milan, C. to some out-of-the-way provincial prison.

This long description is to try to show how a simple attempt to obtain a basic 'right' comes to be considered a dangerous threat to order and submission. The fact is it's necessary to see the context we're talking about. You don't enter prison saying, wow, lots of people locked up, here's fertile ground for rebellion, let's have a go. In the first place, most people have many problems and are simply not interested in how you define yourself, and personally I didn't try doing so, other than through my way of relating to them and the surroundings, although in some prisons there were 'politicals' who knew about us. That's different. In the normal run of events, when you are in prison I think your job is to get on with being a prisoner and continue living your life under 'different' conditions and try to contribute to raising the tone of what can often be a pretty dismal reality.

Most of the women inside are in a far worse situation than we are. Many have children, sometimes thousands of miles away, and worry about them all the time. We are privileged because we have comrades, solidarity, excellent lawyers who are often comrades themselves.

Having said that, it was a great experience to encounter so many different crazy people that one wouldn't otherwise have met due to personal choices and all the ghettos we 'scum of the earth' are divided up into: gypsies, drug addicts, 'murderers', 'historic leaders' of once upon a time, prostitutes, 'drug ponies [mules]', etc. And I lived some intense and at times hilarious moments. Don't

get me wrong, prison wasn't 'the best days of my life'. But, when a number of very particular human beings who are forced to cohabit against their will make it to come together on the basis of this common denominator and simply be themselves for a moment with their exquisite idiosyncrasies, a strange alchemy occurs that transcends all walls and becomes a true moment of freedom, and a threat to the status quo of the prison.

Of course it would have been better to have brought down the walls for real ... Many of these women are still locked up. Many more have joined them.

You asked about solidarity, and I can't conclude this reverie without mentioning an unforgettable moment of solidarity that I experienced from the other prisoners. As I said, I received a lot of mail that wasn't officially censored, among which was the whole collection of *Canenero* and a considerable quantity of back issues of the Italian anarchist paper *Provocazione* that came out in the eighties. At Opera, the latter were removed from the cell I was in following a routine search, with a few feeble justifications such as 'fire risk', 'illicitly acquired', etc. What was obvious was that the contents were definitely not appreciated by those who had come across them. I was furious, and demanded my papers back.

Anyone who's been in prison will know that there's no such thing as 'demand and response', even the most insignificant request such as getting permission to buy a pair of socks has to go through a process that might take weeks. I wasn't prepared to wait, and to cut a long story short, ended up staging a protest by simply refusing to go in from the yard and be locked up after the exercise period. The immediate result of this was that I managed to get an audience with the Mareschiallo from the male prison; I eventually got my papers back, and the much hated uberscrew in charge of the female prison disappeared from circulation for a few weeks, which gave everyone a break.

The second result was to be escorted to a kind of 'internal court' on Monday morning, presided over by the prison governor in the presence of screws, cops, psychologists, etc. The verdict: guilty of insubordination. The punishment: two weeks in the punishment cell. That shocked everybody on the wing, many of whom had been 'inside' for nearly twenty years. The rare punishments at Opera were 2–3 days. After being checked by the doctor who signed that I was fit to face the sentence (the doctor always has the last word, even on Death Row...), I was marched down to the isolation block, to be locked up 22 hours a day, and have only essential possessions: my anarchist papers (I made sure I got these), a couple of books, a dictionary and a small radio. Screws were assigned to sit on the other side of the metal door peering at me through the spy hole and let me out for exercise in a small, squalid yard for one hour in the morning and one in the afternoon. Anyone who talked to me would receive similar sanctions.

After spending most of the night at war with the mosquitoes (it was the middle of August, 40 degrees) I woke up to the sound of a loud rap number just

Another group, the Angry Brigade, which was active in England, carried out various attacks over a number of years. The specific interest that they generated was that they didn't write long communiques, just very short and to incite people to attack themselves. I don't have their exact words here, but one of their communiques was "what do you want, sit here gazing into nothing in a drug-store drinking tasteless coffee, or blow it up?"¹¹ Some of their first communiques were just three words, or a few syllables. It would be fascinating to talk about the group but I don't think we have time and I don't think it is particularly relevant to the points we want to make, but I do think that one of the great developments they made to the anarchist approach to armed attack was the very fact of short communiques.

Now I come to Italy, at the end of the 70s, to briefly look at an armed struggle group named Azione Rivoluzionaria, which defined itself specifically anarchist. Now there is a strange feeling about going into talking about an armed group, as an outsider, not as a member of the group, because we know normally those who do that are the other side—the enemy, the cops and so on. One of the main aspects of the armed closed organisation is the fact that their actions belong to them.

So, in the latter part of the 70s, some comrades of the anarcho-libertarian area—firstly, we have to say that '77 is a context known in Italy as the "Anni di piombo", the "Years of Lead", because there were thousands of people in the streets, demonstrating, and there was a diffused armed guerilla in the whole of Italy in those years. There were many armed groups, of the closed Marxist-Leninist kind, and there was a critique of these groups, and this critique was active, in the form of small nuclei of attack. These groups either did not claim their attacks at all or invented a name for each series of actions or specific attack.

Azione rivoluzionaria formed in a moment of very widely diffused liberatory violence. Young people had lost all their taboos about violence and in '77 when

¹¹"If you're not busy being born you're busy buying". All the sales girls in the flash boutiques are made to dress the same and have the same make-up, representing the 1940's. In fashion as in everything else, capitalism can only go backwards...they've nowhere to go—they're dead.

The future is ours.

Life is so boring there is nothing to do except spend all our wages on the latest skirt or shirt. Brothers and Sisters, what are your real desires?

Sit in the drugstore, look distant, empty, bored, drinking some tasteless coffee? Or perhaps *blow it up or burn it down*.

The only thing you can do with modern slave-houses—called boutiques—is *wreck them*. You can't reform profit capitalism and inhumanity. Just kick it till it breaks.

Revolution.

Communiqué 8

The Angry Brigade

different times. So, we are having to continually work out which strategy to use against the enemy at a given moment. We don't make a political analysis, we want the destruction of politics, but we make a social analysis at the level of the exploited, with whom we will have to carry out this destruction.

So, with that rather garbled introduction, (because I belong to the barbarians, the stammerers, I do not have a political way of reasoning,) ..nevertheless, the comrades who made the proposition have put us in a situation where we have to make an effort also, to look at certain things more closely which seemed already given, to look at them again in the problematic.

One of the problematics for anarchists has occasionally been—Is it possible for anarchists to act within a closed group, clandestine or otherwise, in the dimension of armed struggle? Or does the group end up by definition closing itself and separating itself from our other comrades in struggle, i.e. the exploited, the excluded. We have our thoughts, we have our ideas on this question, we have our experiments, we have our methodology, but everything is in the dimension of a great flux of reality that we live in, nothing is fixed and nothing is certain forever. We play the game the way we decide, we take responsibility for our actions, and when needed we pay the price, we make our own rules, but we're free to break them whenever we like, because we haven't sworn any allegiance to anyone.

—I know, everyone is tired, I don't know if we are still barricaded in by the riot cops, and this meeting is like one taking place in a bunker; which is a reality check for anyone, but there is never any doubt about being in a war here in Greece.

—Very briefly, they've been mentioned before, but the various experiments and experiences of [anarchist] armed struggle (in the sense of the closed group—because this can take place in other circumstances):

There was the 1st of May Group, which was active at the end of the 60s, that carried out various attacks in different cities in Europe, against Francoism and also against the murder of [Giuseppe] Pinelli¹⁰. Sometimes doing coordinated bombings in different cities on the same day. One aspect which underlined, and for them, seemed to verify the fact that they were anarchists, was the fact that they attacked property not individuals. "We attack property, not people" was one of their slogans. Now, of course, we know very well that anarchists do not attack "people".

Anarchists attack class enemies. These are not "people".

¹⁰ Anarchist comrade Giuseppe Pinelli, born in Milan 1928, a railway worker, who at the time was secretary of Crocenera Anarchica—Italian Anarchist Black Cross—'fell' to his death from the 4th floor of the Milan police headquarters where he had been held under interrogation for 3 days following the fascist bomb in the Banca Nazionale dell'Agricoltura in Milan on 12 December 1969.

outside the window. Peering outside I could see the girls that worked in the garden below dancing in single file through the plants, rapping out the whole story. What a buzz! Then when I got out for 'air' all the women in the section were at their windows singing a whole repertoire of love and battle songs at the top of their voices. The confusion was such that the screws had to take me away from that dirty yard to the sports ground for exercise twice a day.

For the rest ... suffice to say that for the whole duration all the prison food ended up down the toilet as I received a constant supply of fresh food, hot coffee, etc etc, thanks to the cunning and creativity that only those who are locked up against their will are capable of, unseen by the uniformed spies outside the cell or the armed guards patrolling the walls. When the two weeks were up, big party on the wing!

After you left prison, how did you feel coming 'out' into 'society'?

Society? What's that? I think I experienced society like an iron vice from the day I was born. They had to lock me in the classroom for the first two weeks I was at kindergarten. Perhaps the closest I've been to being 'in' society was when I was in jail. You can't escape it—unless as I said, you declare yourself 'prisoner of war' and spend the rest of your time alone, with special status. Prison is a microcosm of the world outside, a kind of caricature that you're stuck in. There's nowhere to hide, so you become socialised to some extent whether you like it or not, for the sake of the other prisoners and in order to try to do something with your time. But always within precise limits. Like society outside, the prison structure is polarising: segregating and excluding the rebels and moving towards the integration and participation of certain other prisoners in their own incarceration. The times that I came within inches of this participatory oppression were the worst for me, and the kind of reality they are aiming for filled me with disgust. You'd like to spit in the screw's eye and tell her to wipe the smile off her face when she comes to unlock you in the morning, but you can even end up saying 'good morning'. Recently an Italian comrade told me that when he was in prison last year there were some of the old Red Brigades militants who always called the screws 'stronzo' or 'pezzo di merda' – 'shit' in either case, and how the other cons really envied them for it. Had they tried it, they'd have ended up black and blue and with a few broken ribs.

Generally, you need to teach yourself to contain your loathing for the whole setup. On coming out I was under house arrest for a while, then I came back to London as I had another short sentence pending in Italy concerning a stolen car connected to the robbery. I slipped unobtrusively into my ghetto existence here. Not with pride, I may say, because such an existence is full of compromise like any other. There's no real struggle here, no tension in terms of attacking what oppresses you and everyone around you. You can become a frenetic activist or you can spend some time trying to take stock, 'socialise' yourself within

that reality to some extent and keep carrying on with your own projectuality as best you can, always in the dimension of seeking affinities and outlets for the struggle as you want to experience it. So, in this open prison you're also a misfit, an outsider playing a role and respecting the 'social rules'.

Italy has a long history of insurrection both in recent times and distant, can you talk about some of the social struggles there that you have been involved in?

In Italy, in the seventies and eighties, although there was a proliferation of clandestine organisations in declared war against the State, there was also a diffused insurrectional movement, and that was certainly exciting, it was in the air you breathed around you. There were many examples of mass squatting, occupation of universities, non-payment of tickets, bus rides, meals, etc. in towns like Bologna where hundreds of young people just refused to pay. Many small actions of attack were carried out by individuals or very small groups of people without all the rhetoric of the armed organisations, and this was to have a profound effect on that part of the anarchist movement that had been pushing in that direction. There was always a strong sense of projectuality and of being part of the struggle for freedom along with other comrades in this informal movement.

That developed into what some anarchists refer to as the 'insurrectional method' of struggle. The latter interpretation involves attempts to draw in mass participation along with anarchists against a given objective, based on a certain organisational hypothesis. This requires a constant engagement in the struggle over a period of time. It's not a question of a small group of anarchists deciding to attack a particular expression of power, but an attempt to involve large numbers of people self-organised in a proliferation of base organisms—nuclei, leagues or whatever they decided to call themselves—and attack the objective all together. The point of this way of organising is that it can't become hierarchical, but can extend and multiply horizontally, and once the objective is in view and all the individuals involved are experiencing a qualitative change in their relationship to power (absence of delegating, deciding in first in first person, creativity, etc.), the struggle might go even go beyond the objective.

I am lucky to have lived one such experience, even if the end result wasn't that which everybody had desired and worked hard for. But that doesn't matter. The time was the 1980's, the place, Comiso, in the island of Sicily, where I was living at the time. The Americans had decided to deposit some Cruise missiles in the military base there, and there was wide local dissent about this. Anti-nuclear protestors, the communist party, the socialist party, the greens, etc. protested in massive demos or pacifist pickets outside the base. The local anarchists decided to distinguish themselves from this circus and act in a protracted struggle in the logic of mass rebellion. The essence of anarchist struggle is in the means, not the end. We drew up leaflets analysing the reasons, not only military but also social and economic, as to why the only serious answer to this

We are here now tonight because the comrades of Revolutionary Struggle made an invitation to the movement of this kind. Given the state of the reality that we are living in today, the only choice we have is to attack and destroy this world, as it exists, in the form it exists at the moment, so the question is, how do we go about this and what forms do we use?

The comrades of Revolutionary Struggle made their choice, they didn't ask the consensus of the comrades in an assembly—they're individuals, they made their decisions as free individuals, stood by them and acted coherently and are taking the consequences. They have emerged from the belly of the beast to come back into the movement to embrace the comrades with their proposals, and this, I think, is what defines this moment, which is this two days [of the conference].

So this encounter also has the characteristic of the struggle, it is a moment of struggle, not just a moment for reminiscing or talking about the past, therefore it is a moment of solidarity, because there is no difference between solidarity and struggle, for us solidarity is a continuation of the struggle everywhere.

For anarchists, we don't have a linear view of the past, and then, into the future. We don't have a history with a capital 'H', but a patrimony, a heritage—which is still alive today. Some of the comrades of the past, and even a century before, are still alive in the struggle, and there are many aspects of the anarchist movement which could be summed up as the armed, violent, section of attack against the system, and much of this movement has disappeared, because it hasn't been recorded, it does not have its reference points, it doesn't have historians.

I would just like to say that I would like to consider myself an element of tension in the attempt to move towards the attack and destruction of the existent. This is something which can't be described or quantified. It is a qualitative tendency that exists in the movement, which is giving itself moments of experimentation, and also evaluation of methods, which is a question that is posed to us tonight, that of armed struggle.

One more thing I'd like to say, on the subject of England. There are some comrades who are also here with us in spirit, in England. They send their love and their solidarity to the comrades who are promoting this event, as well as to all the comrades in the prisons and those fighting in the streets. Greece is a great inspiration and continues to be a great inspiration in this context. And some of the comrades in England are working assiduously to make known many aspects of the struggle here, including the documents and reporting of the trial of the comrades of Revolutionary Struggle.

Armed struggle is a method, it is not the whole of the struggle, it's a selection, a choice of field. It is done in a certain way, with certain objectives, but we, as anarchists, also have other methods, which we apply at the same time or at

Armed Struggle and the Revolutionary movement⁹

Athens, Greece: A transcription of a brief presentation during an international conference called by the members of the armed group Revolutionary Struggle. The event took place on the 7–8 June 2012 and concerned the armed movements in Europe and their history, plus the prospect of global social revolution as an answer to the systemic crisis.

Speakers also included Brigitte Asdonk (Red Army Faction), Bertrand Sassoye (Communist Combatant Cells), Jose Rodriguez, Andreas Vogel (June 2nd Movement), Christos Tsigaridas (Revolutionary Popular Struggle) and Commission for an International Red Help. Nikos Maziotis and Pola Roupa of Revolutionary Struggle also made presentations at the conference. These comrades have since gone into clandestinity, from where we hope the authorities never touch them again.

* * *

Athens, Greece. A hot university, barricaded in, riot cops positioned outside.

A transcript not to be lost in translation or memory...

[Chairs clatter, screech on the floor. People cough. The flick of lighters. Quiet chatter in the crowd is a deafening roar... Attention focuses and wanders off in the heat...The microphone is being set-up...]

Chaos...

I think I distinguished myself on the poster here as not having an organisation or an acronym after my name, (but a great word, “England”!), so that requires an explanation. I don’t belong to any organisation or acronym, and of course, that was always a conscious choice in my life and the years I’ve lived through. These choices, as the comrades here already explained, were there for everybody to make, if they so desired. As is the case today.

⁹Text transcribed and published by 325 #10

project of death was to occupy the base and destroy it, and printed thousands of them on an old hand-operated Roneo duplicator using stencils that some comrades from Class War had given us in England. Nobody had any money to speak of and everything was improvised as we went along. We managed to assemble a sound system, and travelled, doing—usually Alfredo [Bonanno]—very strong unequivocal outdoor talks in the piazzas of the neighbouring villages, which were attended by most of the male population of each place. We also did leaflets specifically addressed to women and went around the living areas handing them out and having impromptu ‘capanelli’ with some of them. We did leaflets addressed to the workers at the Anic petrol refinery (who refused to go into work until we were released when the Digos—political cops—pulled us in), and to school students, handing them out outside all the schools. Some of the pupils refused to go in for a day as a result, and held a spontaneous demo that filled one of the piazzas. It was here that I began to see how power actually works at local level: the leader of the Communist Party came knocking at our door, proposing that we ‘work together’. Needless to say, he was given short shrift. By this time some people had lent us a little old house, as many of us lived over 60 miles away. The meetings and leafleting, posters, etc had led to some people from different areas and walks of life—pupils, lorry drivers, farm workers, etc., agreeing on the need to destroy the base, and they formed minimal ‘base organisations’ that they called leagues for lack of a better word. These leagues, which often consisted of two or three people but had the potential to expand and multiply as the struggle intensified, began to need a place as a point of reference and co-ordination, i.e. to have meetings, draw up and print leaflets etc. A small place was rented in Comiso for that purpose and referred to as the Coordinamento for the self-managed leagues against the Cruise missile base in Comiso. And these were the people who really had the power to destroy the base—with their workmates, neighbours, families, farm animals, tractors, diggers, etc. That was the dream. But, apart from the repression pure and simple, there was a combination of obstacles, including the local ‘mafia’, two masked individuals who burst in on us with guns one night and fired a shot that went through Alfredo’s trouser-leg.

Then there was the Communist Party, always acting as fire extinguishers as is their role—and, last, but not least, the anarchist movement itself and our own limitations. It’s not possible to go into all the details of this struggle now, but looking back in time, I think that some record should be made of this attempt as it was a very real experience that had a strong experimental and theoretical aspect, so belongs to everybody.

The publishing project you are involved in – ‘Elephant Editions’ – is well known for being the main translator of Alfredo Maria Bonanno and other ‘insurrectional’ anarchists, whilst we don’t want to add to or create a cult of personality, can you explain why the ideas of Alfredo, and the other writers you publish, are important

for the struggle to overthrow the conditions which oppress us?

In the first place, we are talking about ideas, quite rare merchandise these days. Ideas with a subversive charge, which encounter and stimulate other ideas that take us out of the swamp of opinion and tolerance and help us to reach the lucidity necessary to act upon and transform the reality that oppresses us. I should say that I have never approached any of the texts that I've translated and subsequently published other than with the purely selfish intention of wanting to enter the discourse and clarify some ideas myself. When eventually (after a long struggle) the text becomes something tangible in English, I want others to read it too. For (some) people reading such texts becomes an encounter, a level of self discovery derived from seeing ideas set out in the written word with a certain level of clarity. Tensions that we already feel burning inside us become clearer, making it easier to gather and assimilate them in order to act. So, the text takes on its own life, makes its journey within the context of the struggle, contributes to giving the comrades that so desire it an instrument for recognising and valorising their own ideas and dreams, turning them into a point of strength in life and in the struggle. The text then becomes both a subjective encounter and a physical 'thing', which in the vicissitudes of its journey throughout social and ideal space, becomes an element in creating informal relations between individual comrades. As well as that, we all need analysis—for example of the economy, the new technologies the changing faces of power and the struggle, new enemies and false friends, and, let's face it, many of us are lazy or lack method when it comes to gaining knowledge. Without ideas, analyses and projectuality we are nothing, mere abstractions building castles in the air, the hot air of formal structures and their organisational obsessions. The structure of the Italian language, and these texts in particular, is quite different to the English language of 'pirates and shopkeepers'; it always takes me a long time to get them readable to a certain degree, and to follow the argument through. It's quite a journey, particularly as these comrades, Alfredo and the others I have translated are my comrades in struggle, we lived through the experience of these ideas in practice, they come from the development of the movement over the past few decades. I believe that these particular ideas, or theories, are an important contribution to the struggle today because they come from the part of the movement that doesn't refer to any fixed organisation or formal structure and wants to attack oppression in all its forms directly. In fact, attack and the theory of attack—which is the same thing for anarchists—are the essential element of the informal movement, without which it would exist in name alone. So, there is also a strong element of critique in these writings, a critique of the fixed anarchist organisation such as syndicalism or the federation that relies on numbers, as being limiting and anachronistic in terms of attack. At the same time, there is a critique of the clandestine organisation and 'attack at the heart of the State' that was quite prevalent in the seventies,

particularly in Italy. Most of these organisations were of a Marxist-Leninist matrix, but some anarchists tried to do the impossible by forming an 'anarchist' version that ended up falling into the contradictions of any fixed clandestine set-up. And I do believe that many anarchists at that time felt considerable pressure upon them to form some such an organisation in order to be 'in the reality of the struggle'.

The theories we are talking about valorise the formation of small groups not weighed down by ideological preconceptions, acting directly on reality without any sense of sacrifice but for their own immediate pleasure and freedom, in the context of the freedom of all. Another essential component in the writings we are discussing is that of analysis of the profound changes that have taken place in the past three or four decades and have affected the way exploitation functions throughout the whole world and the struggle against it. The 'new technologies' that many young comrades experience as normality today, actually changed the way the world is run. The whole productive set-up, including that of food, the extraction of fuel etc. moved from Europe to Asia and the East, following a massive project of restructuring that was met with rebellion that almost reached the point of generalised insurrection in some countries. This was followed by a complete change in educational requirements by the system, and an extensive cultural flattening in favour of infinite chains of data that take us nowhere.

It should also be said that, once certain texts existed in English, alas the language of the new world order, they have been translated into their own language by anarchists in other parts of the world who have seen something interesting in them, and that is one of the things that has given me most pleasure in the whole endeavour.

A quick word on the concept of 'cult of personality', as you brought it up. I think that this concept is strange to anarchists in general. Anarchists are judged by other comrades according to what they say and do, and the coherence between these two factors, not through diatribes about their personal, real or invented, attributes as practised by organisations that rely on charismatic leaders and such like as came about in Russia following the Bolshevik takeover. If anything, it's the other way around. Personal attacks exist at times that take the place of actual critique of the methods exposed by certain comrades when some sectors of the movement find their status quo threatened by these methods. That is easier than attacking the ideas themselves and opposing them with others that might be more effective, who knows. But, as I said, this is not a true characteristic of anarchists who by their very existence deny the concept of leader and at the same time exalt the individual, each and every individual, in the dimension of equality.